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FIVE QUEER WOMEN

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SUSANNA CENTLIVRE

From a mezzotint after a painting by D. Fermin

Frontispiece

FIVE QUEER WOMEN

BY

WALTER and CLARE A. JERROLD

Copeland, [pseud.] 1865-1929

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PREFACE

The five women, something about whose lives and writings we have set forward in the following pages, represent roughly a century of certain aspects of our social and literary history—from the beginning of the reign of "the merry monarch," the second Charles, to the end of the reign of the "snuffy old drone," the second George. Each of these women has been so discredited with that "queerness" which is referred to with raised eyebrows in the nicer times that have followed, that what she *was,* or was reputed to be, has been allowed to obscure more or less completely, what she achieved.

In Aphra Behn we have England's first professional woman writer, a playwright by no means of the lowest rank among the dramatists of the Restoration period, and the earliest English woman novelist. In Mary de la Rivière Manley we have the introducer into English literature of the "secret history" in the form of fiction, the romance with a key. In Susanna Centlivre we have the most outstanding English woman playwright, one who demonstrated so remarkable a gift for presenting a story through the medium of actors that some of her pieces remained in our acting drama for close upon two centuries. In Eliza Haywood we have a writer of a fecundity only comparable with that of Defoe, one who—following Mrs. Behn in amorously passionate novels, Mrs. Centlivre in acting and playwriting and Mrs. Manley in the concocting of *chroniques scandaleuse*—from her sheer sustained output, and adaptability to changing taste occupies an important position in the evolution of English fiction. In Letitia Pilkington we may recognise the first woman writer who indulged in the revelations of frank and intimate autobiography.

It may be claimed that three, if not four, out of the five deserve to be remembered not only as pioneers of their sex in the literary profession but for positive achievement in the drama and in that newer field of fiction in which women and men were in a few generations to rank co-equally; and they were pioneers who had to persist against prejudice, for three of them had to complain of unfair treatment of their work " because it was a woman's."

When it is objected against some of these women that they wrote, as Pepys put it, of some of Aphra Behn's contemporaries " smuttily," it is only fair to recall that their freedom in treating of sexual relations, their coarseness and " warmth " are paralleled in the writings of their male contemporaries. There is too often a tendency to disregard the fact that these women were of their time and wrote for their time; as society mended its manners and hid those things it had flaunted, and whispered in corners those things which it had uttered in the open, so did the writers, women as well as men cease to make copy of such things. As to the private lives of our five queer women, it may be admitted, without having any recourse to the white-wash bucket, that in some cases but little is discoverable as to their immorality, beyond certain scandalous stories which have no established foundation other than the word of the scandalmonger; in the other instances the writers have themselves left us in little doubt as to the unseemliness of their behaviour.

CHAPTER I

APHRA BEHN

First professional woman-author—Most reviled of writers—Laudation and libels—Confused, contradictory and complicated story—Were there two Aphras?—Early biographical nonsense—A West Indian appointment—The journey to Surinam—"Lieutenant-General of six-and-thirty islands" dies at sea—"I had none above me in that country"—Short sojourn in Surinam—Some particulars of the stay there—Aphra inspired by vanity and swank—Hints of El Dorado—The story of Oroonoko—A blending of history and romance—Reunion of Oroonoko and Imoinda—"Black Friday"—Tragic attempted exodus of the slaves—An appalling resolve and its sequel—Aphra returns to England—Curios for the King's collection and costume for the theatre—Married and widowed—A brief "spy" interlude in Antwerp—Winning an exiled lover—Harassed for money, and no remittances—Return to England: fantastic vision on the voyage—Aphra sends home important news, which is scoffed at—Her "Dutch" lovers—Penniless at home, pathetic petitions—And so to prison—Aphra turns to playwriting—A characteristic dramatist of the Restoration—Novelist, poet and translator—Licensed freedom of the time—Blamed for being a woman.

I

A GIFTED person with a queer story, and a queerly contradictory fame is that woman who coming of age a year after the Restoration of Charles the Second, died at the early age of forty-eight, three or four years after the death of his saturnine majesty, whom she had

charmed for a time, by whom she had been scurvily treated, and for whom she ever retained the most extravagant admiration. Her tangled story we have essayed to set forward in the following pages, and in doing so can claim to have straightened out one or two of the many kinks. The character of her fame may perhaps best be indicated by the preliminary presentation of a few of the voices through which fame has spoken. She was the first English woman to turn professional author—as poet, dramatist and novelist. As dramatist she wrote at least seventeen plays, the best of which put her in the judgment of many critics in the front rank of the Restoration dramatists. Yet it is no exaggeration to say that no writer of her capacity has been more freely and more frequently reviled and that with little discrimination and less thought. Here are a few passages from the utterances of what may be termed the counsel for the prosecution—

Says Alexander Pope (in *Imitations of Horace*):

> "The stage how loosely does Astrea tread,
> Who fairly puts all characters to bed."*

Says Theophilus Cibber (in *Lives of the Poets*): "Mrs. Behn suffered enough at the hands of supercilious prudes who had the barbarity to construe her sprightliness into

* Every writer on Aphra Behn quotes this indifferent couplet of the great satirist's; none has hitherto pointed out that another famous couplet of Pope's is really nothing more than a tersifying of a quatrain in Aphra Behn's poem addressed to Henry Higden on his translation of Juvenal:

> "Wit is no more than nature well expressed;
> And he fatigues and toils in vain
> With rigid labours, breaks his brain,
> That has familiar thought in lofty numbers dressed."

It is difficult to believe that Pope was not consciously adapting the first and fourth lines when he wrote:

> "True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
> What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

Pope's latest editors have pointed out how closely the opening line of his *Sappho to Phaon*, "Say, lovely youth, that dost my heart command," echoes Aphra Behn's, "Say, lovely youth, why wouldst thou thus betray."

lewdness, and because she had wit and beauty, she must likewise be charged with prostitution and irreligion."

Says S. Austin Allibone (in his otherwise valuable *Dictionary of English Literature*): "The licentiousness of Mrs. Behn's pen is a disgrace to her sex and the language."

Says Miss Julia Kavanagh (in *English Women of Letters*): "Mrs. Aphra Behn was a novelist as well as a dramatist. She was so unfortunate as to deserve Sir Richard Steele's censure in both characters, and what we know of her, though suggestive of an entertaining life, which we have no right to pronounce actually vicious, is not, however, of a nature to raise either esteem or affection. The inveterate coarseness of her mind sullied Aphra Behn's noblest gifts; beauty, sincerity, wit, an eloquent tongue and a ready pen, perished in that wreck of all that is delicate and refined in woman. . . . But granting that her life remained pure, which is possible even in a woman fond of pleasure, surrounded by lovers, and who philosophically said of religion, 'that it would but destroy the tranquillity of the heathen Indians,' one thing is certain, pure her mind was not, but tainted to the very core. She loved grossness for its own sake, because it was congenial to her. She wrote dramas which, though not worse than those of her contemporaries, revolted the public as proceeding from a woman, yet, braving censure and reproof, with an independence worthy a better cause, she persisted in her course."

Says John Doran (in *Their Majesties' Servants*): "Her opportunities for good were great, but she abused them all. She might have been an honour to womanhood;—she was its disgrace. She might have gained glory by her labours;—but she chose to reap infamy. Her pleasures were not those which became an honest woman; and as for her 'Muses,' she sat not with them on the slopes of Helicon, but dragged them down to her level where the Nine and their unclean votary wallowed together in the mire. There is no one who equals this woman in down-

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right nastiness, save Ravenscroft and Wycherley; but the latter of these had more originality of invention and grace of expression. To these writers, and those of their detestable school, she set a revolting example. Dryden preceded her, by a little, on the stage; but Mrs. Behn's trolloping Muse appeared there before the other two writers I have mentioned, and was making unseemly exhibition there after the coming of Congreve. With Dryden she vied in indecency, and was not overcome. To all other male writers of her day she served as a provocative and an apology. Intellectually, she was qualified to lead them through pure and bright ways; but she was a mere harlot, who danced through uncleanness, and dared them to follow. Remonstrance was useless with this wanton hussey. Her private life has found a champion in a female friend, whose previous balsam breaks the head it would anoint. According to this friend, Mrs. Behn had numerous good qualities; but 'she was a woman of sense, and consequently loved pleasure;' and she was 'more gay and free than the modesty of the precise will allow.'"

Says Anthony Trollope (in his *Autobiography,* concerning his reading with a view to a history of English prose fiction he had contemplated): "I never worked harder than at the *Arcadia,* or read more detestable trash than the stories written by Mrs. Aphra Behn."

After those sufficiently extravagant generalisations of the attack, we may hear what some of the speakers for the defence have to say in her favour—

Says Algernon Charles Swinburne (in *Studies in Prose and Poetry*): "Dryden, the greatest and most various representation of his age at its best and at its worst, is not for a moment comparable as a song-writer to Lord Rochester or to Mrs. Behn. . . . But misrepresentation has been the lot of the virtuous Aphra ever since her hallowed dust gave additional consecration to the Pantheon of British bards . . . and when Mr. Homer Wilbur, after citing 'a play of Mrs. Behn's,' excused himself for

having done so by the reflection that 'even these kennels of literature may yield a fact or two to pay the raking,' so ardent an advocate of emancipation as Mr. Lowell might have remembered that this improper woman of genius was the first literary abolitionist—the first champion of the slave on record in the history of fiction; in other words, in the history of creative literature."

Says Sir Edmund Gosse (in the *Dictionary of National Biography*): "She deserves our sympathy as a warm-hearted, gifted, and industrious woman, who was forced by circumstance and temperament to win her livelihood in a profession where scandalous writing was at that time obligatory. It is impossible, with what we know regarding her life, to defend her manners as correct or her attitude to the world as delicate. But we may be sure that a woman so witty, so active, and so versatile, was not degraded, though she might be lamentably unconventional."

Says Mr. Montague Summers (*Memoir of Mrs. Behn* in vol. i. of his edition of her "Works"): "In truth Aphra Behn's life was not one of mere pleasure, but a hard struggle against overwhelming adversity, a continual round of work. We cannot but admire the courage of this lonely woman, who, poor and friendless, was the first in England to turn to the pen for a livelihood, and not only won herself bread, but no mean position in the world of her day and English literature of all time."

Says Miss V. Sackville-West (in *Aphra Behn, the Incomparable Astrea*): "I think it is easy to prove from her own writings that she retained a very true sense of proportion; that she never lost the faculty of seeing life from the outside; and that her scorn of falsehood was at least as great as her delight in pleasure. In other words, Mrs. Behn, properly edited—and quite apart from the *Love-Letters to a Gentleman,* which are not to be put into the same category as her professional writings—may be represented as an exceedingly moral and idealistic writer."

II

So confused, so contradictory, so complicated are the recorded details concerning the life of Aphra Behn* that it is extremely difficult to write down anything of her life story, and say "this is a fact." In English literature she occupies the position of the first professional woman-writer; she spent a few months during the Dutch War as a Government agent in Antwerp, and owing to the long deferring of the payment of her dues therefor was thrown into a debtor's prison; she wrote some poems, a number of amorous novels (short stories, we should now term them), and a number of plays marked with such freedom of language, such suggestiveness of situation, as were common and characteristic of the stage in the Restoration period; and she was buried in Westminster Abbey. That in effect sums up what might be called the incontrovertible maximum of our knowledge of the life-story of a most piquant personality.

There is, however, much more than that which has to be accepted with qualifications, reservations, and even dubiety, though the involved story is gradually getting itself disentangled. We had already arrived independently at certain conclusions in connection with some details of Aphra's story before finding the same views set forward in Mr. Summers's biographical introduction to the "Works" of Aphra Behn and before the publication of Miss Sackville-West's engaging monograph.† Yet, as we shall have occasion to note both of these writers have overlooked one or two points where further clarification has proved possible; both have, on one of those points denied an oft-repeated statement concerning Aphra's "spy"

* We use the commonly accepted form of her Christian name, of which there are many orthographical variants, ranging from Apharra to Fyhare.

† *The Works of Aphra Behn*, edited by Montagu Summers, 1915; *Aphra Behn, the Incomparable Astrea*, by V. Sackville-West, 1927.

period, where there is contemporary documentary proof of that statement's truth.

III

"It is indeed a very curious curse that has been laid upon the legend of Aphra Behn," says Miss Sackville-West; and as that curse appears to take the form of compelling misstatement on the part of all who take her for a theme, we turn to the subject with some trepidation. It was only in 1884 that the late Sir Edmund Gosse made the notable discovery that Aphra had not, as had been believed for over two centuries, been born at Canterbury near the close of the reign of Charles I, but at Wye some eight or nine miles south west of Canterbury, and in July, 1640, her father being John Johnson, a barber! There was an air of finality about this that was eminently satisfactory to the compilers of reference books—though the later appointment of a Kentish barber as Lieutenant-General of Surinam seemed a little difficult to reconcile with use and wont. Gosse himself, in the *D.N.B.*, dodged the difficulty by saying that the appointment was given to a relative whom she called her father.

Thirty years later another inspection of the baptismal register at Wye revealed the fact that Gosse had been misled, the Aphra—Ayfara—who had, along with her brother Peter, been baptised on July 10, 1640, was the daughter of John and Amy Amis! Mr. Summers accepts Amis as the patronymic of our heroine, and Miss Sackville-West does the same, but with the qualification that "the persistence of the name Johnson, to my mind, has not been really explained away, even by the evidence of the parish register at Wye."

That Aphra's paternal name was given as Johnson by those who had known her personally must, indeed, still bear considerable weight; and we would suggest two possible explanations. What, after all, does the Wye

register establish beyond the fact that a girl of the name of Ayfara was baptised there on a certain date? The identification of that girl with our heroine rests upon a few lines in a poem, *The Circuit of Apollo,* by Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, and a note appended thereto:

> And standing where sadly he now might descry
> From the banks of the Stour the desolate Wye,
> He lamented for Behn, o'er the place of her birth,
> And said, amongst women there was not on earth
> Her superior in fancy, in language, or wit,
> Yet owned that a little too loosely she writ.

The note added to these lines says that Mrs. Behn was daughter of a barber, who lived formerly in Wye. It is possible that the Ayfara Amis of Wye, whose father may possibly have been a barber, for we have no evidence as to his status, was, for some reason or other, adopted in early childhood into a Canterbury family named Johnson; indeed we have record of her being an adopted daughter of the Johnson who received the Surinam appointment, though unfortunately no evidence is adduced in support of that statement. The other possible explanation we would suggest is that the unusual name of Ayfara may have been a family one, and that the Ayfara Amis of Wye and the Aphra Johnson who became Aphra Behn were merely kin —in which case the place and date of our Aphra's birth and the secret of her parentage would remain still to be discovered.

All through Aphra Behn's life we are confronted with curious problems and discrepancies, and even after her death something of the same nature attaches to her name for the first memoir of her is described as written by "one of the Fair Sex," yet a very plausible theory may be made out in favour of that misleading description masking Charles Gildon, a busy scribbler of the time who knew Aphra in her closing years. Most early writers about

Aphra contented themselves with accepting, or embroidering that first somewhat fantastic memoir which was contributed, seven years after her death, to "*All the Histories and Novels,* written by the Late Ingenious Mrs. Behn, Intire in one Volume,"* even though many of the statements therein are in part self-contradictory, do not tally with Aphra's own recorded recollections, or, in one instance, with contemporary documents preserved in the Public Record Office.

The writer of that basic sketch of Aphra Behn's career claimed to have had close personal acquaintance with her subject, such intimate acquaintance as "inspired me with a noble fire to celebrate that woman who was an honour and glory to our sex." How far the anonymous writer was relying on memory, and how far on the method of a little bit invented and a little bit inferred, it is impossible to say. That she, or he, was not wholly accurate is easily demonstrable. Something of that early record is, however, worth recalling as embodying either things told by Aphra herself, or things contemporaneously current concerning her.

According to that memoir, Aphra was "a gentlewoman by birth, of a good family in the city of Canterbury in Kent; her paternal name was Johnson, whose relation to the Lord Willoughby drew him for the advantageous post of Lieutenant-General of many isles, besides the continent of Surinam, from his quiet retreat at Canterbury to run the hazardous voyage of the West Indies. With him he took his chief riches, his wife and children; and in that number Afra, his promising darling, our future heroine, and admired Astrea, who even in the first bud of infancy, discovered such early hopes of her riper years, that she was equally her parents' joy and fears: for they too often mistrust the loss of a child, whose wit and understanding outstrip its years, as too great a blessing to be long enjoyed. Whether that fear proceeds from superstition, or diffidence

* First published in 1696, and re-issued several times; the edition we have used is the sixth, of 1718.

of our present happiness, I shall not determine; but must pursue my discourse, with assuring you, none had greater fears of that nature, or greater cause for 'em: for besides the vivacity of wit of her conversation at the first use almost of reason in discourse, she would write the prettiest soft engaging verses in the world. Thus qualified she accompanied her parents in their long voyage to Surinam, leaving behind her the sighs and tears of all her friends, and breaking hearts of her lovers, that sighed to possess what was scarce yet arrived to a capacity of easing their pain, if she had been willing. But as she was mistress of uncommon charms of body as well as mind, she gave infinite and raging desires, before she could know the least herself."

Much of that is sheer nonsense, in that it is self-contradictory. The implication is that Aphra was still a mere child when she was taken to the West Indies—and as such it has been accepted by many who have told her story since. If at that time she was a mere child, then the breaking hearts of her lovers is mere verbiage; if she left broken-hearted lovers in England it is presumptive evidence that she had at least reached those 'teens which were regarded as womanhood in the 17th century, when the "fair sex" ripened early. We have here nothing concerning the education and training of the girl who, even if she were as we are told an infant phenomenon in wit and verse-writing, must certainly have received a good education for the time—and that, in all probability, before she went to Surinam.

We seem to have an elusive allusion to the author's family in the opening words of the dedication of one of her plays to the Earl of Arundel, when she speaks of herself as "coming, I may say, into the world with a veneration for your illustrious family, and being brought up with continual praises of the renowned actions of your glorious ancestors." That Earl of Arundel must have been Henry, son of the sixth Duke of Norfolk, who inherited the dukedom in 1684. Aphra's words suggest that her family may have been in some way associated with the Howards.

IV

All the evidence so far available, direct or implicit, tends to show that when the voyage to the West Indies was undertaken Aphra Johnson had reached early womanhood. All that we know of her stay in Surinam is derived from her romantic history of the royal slave Oroonoko, and that gives no dates and implies but few. Some years ago Dr. Ernest Bernbaum of Harvard published a couple of essays in which he sought to demonstrate firstly that as to Oroonoko there was "no sich person," and secondly that Aphra Behn never visited Surinam.* Some of his arguments, however, appear to us to be rather ingenious than convincing.

It may be taken for granted that the Johnsons left England for the West Indies some time ahead of Francis, Lord Willoughby, the Governor-General. Now Willoughby's two voyages to the West Indies took place in 1650 and 1663, and we have Aphra's own definite statement that she made but a short stay in Surinam. It is, in all the circumstances, scarcely believable that she went there as a child still short of her tenth birthday; she could not then have been eye-witness of much that she affirms she did witness, nor could even the ingenuity and ill-will of Restoration slanderers have then devised the silly story of there having been an amour with her negro-hero.

In Rodway and Watt's *Chronological History of the Discovery and Settlement of Guiana* it is stated that Lord Willoughby when released from the Tower with permission to go to Surinam "deputed a relation of his named Johnson as governor of that colony and also to look after his lord's interests in the West Indies. Taking with him his wife and children, *and also an adopted daughter named Afra or Aphra Johnson,* he sailed for Surinam towards the end of

* *Mrs. Behn's "Oroonoko"*; and *Mrs. Behn's Biography a Fiction*, 1913.

this or the beginning of the following year." Now Willoughby was released from the Tower in 1656, which if this be true would date the Johnsons' voyage as 1657. Unfortunately the source of Rodway's information is not given.

There is strong evidence in support of the belief that it was some months before the second voyage of Lord Willoughby that the Johnsons made the journey. John Johnson, however, did not live to reach the colony that was to have been his charge. As Aphra wrote: "My stay was to be short in that country; because my father died at sea, and never arrived to possess the honour (which was Lieutenant-General of six-and-thirty islands, besides the continent of Surinam) nor the advantages he hoped to reap by them: so that though we were obliged to continue on our voyage, we did not intend to stay upon the place." Later on she curiously says "as soon as I came into the country, the best house in it was presented me, called St. John's Hill"—which might appear to suggest that she was the only representative of her father, whereas she tells us incidentally that her mother, a brother and a sister were also with her. Despite those other members of the family of the dead Lieutenant-General-designate she writes more than once as though she had been his only, or chief, representative. Thus in the dedication to *Oroonoko* she says "the Royal Slave I had the honour to know in my travels to the other world; *and though I had none above me in that country,* yet I wanted power to preserve this great man." These things go to show that Aphra was not wanting in that virtue which to-day we denominate swank, and it may be believed that if her father, real or adoptive, had been kin to Lord Willoughby she would assuredly have mentioned the fact.

V

More than once in *Oroonoko* the author refers to the expected early arrival at Surinam of the Lord Governor (Willoughby), so that her stay there must have imme-

diately preceded one of Willoughby's two voyages. We may now indicate something of the hitherto overlooked evidence in support of the belief that it was the later one.

This evidence consists of documents in the Public Record Office, from which we learn that in 1644 a John Johnson was one of half a dozen persons who were trustees representing about four score creditors of the first Earl of Carlisle, who obtained a decree in Chancery for the payment of some £30,000, due to them collectively at the time of that extravagant nobleman's death eight years earlier. Then on December 30, 1649, the second Earl of Carlisle "granted an assignment to the petitioners, for 21 years, half of the profits arising out of the Carribean Islands, devising the other half to Francis Lord Willoughby also for 21 years." Here, at least, we have a John Johnson, Lord Willoughby and Surinam all brought into significant juxtaposition. Early in the following year Willoughby went out with the title of Governor granted to him by the exiled Charles II, whom he proclaimed King on his arrival at Barbadoes. That the Johnson family went then is, as we have already said, extremely unlikely, and if the John Johnson who was a trustee for the Carlisle creditors was also the father of Aphra then they certainly did not. In 1661 the trustees for those creditors, of whom John Johnson was still one, petitioned Charles II, on the grounds that they had not then received one penny of their money, that their debt (the amount of which is now given as £40,000) should be charged upon the profit of the West Indies. Lord Willoughby went out again in the interest of his moiety in the early summer of 1663. It is at least plausible that John Johnson the trustee may have been the "father" of Aphra, that he was given the Surinam appointment in the interests of himself and those other creditors of the Earl of Carlisle whom he represented, and that he and his family sailed to the West sometime between the presentation of the petition in 1661 and the arrival of Lord Willoughby who reached Barbadoes in August, 1663.

Before the Lord Governor got as far as Surinam the surviving Johnsons must have started on the homeward voyage, for Aphra it can be said with some certainty was in England by about the end of that year. Aphra does not mention the arrival of Willoughby, though there is an implication that he was already in the West Indies before her departure. The writer of the early memoir says that the Johnsons only remained in Surinam as long as was necessary before the " arrival of the next ships to take them back to England." Even in the second half of the 17th century such a waiting period was not likely to have been one of many months.

Some expanders of the original biographical sketch have seemingly made no attempt to found their expansion on anything but surmise. Thus in Baker's *Biographia Dramatica* it is said not only that Aphra was " very young " when she went to Surinam, despite the fact that she describes herself as being then a woman, but it is further said that the Johnson family " settled there for some years " yet the earlier biographer (to whom Baker expresses his indebtedness) had recorded that Aphra " only awaited the arrival of the next ships to convey her back to her desired England; where she soon after to her satisfaction, arrived and gave King Charles II so pleasant and rational an account of his affairs there," etc. In that passage we have distinct evidence that Aphra had reached womanhood when she went to Surinam and in support of her stay there having been at the period we suggest. Had she gone as a child there would have been no King Charles II in England for her to have interviewed, as his Restoration did not take place until May, 1660, when Aphra was presumably twenty. It is well nigh certain that the voyage West, the stay in Surinam and the return to England all came within the period 1662-63. In January, 1664, a costume that Aphra had brought with her from Surinam was worn by the heroine of *The Indian Queen* at the King's Theatre.

VI

The particular plantation on which the Johnsons stayed while in Surinam was the Parham Plantation, which appears to have been a three days' boat journey up the Surinam River. Of it Aphra wrote as follows, in a passage that has been already glanced at: "As soon as I came into the country, the best house in it was presented me, called St. John's Hill. It stood on a vast rock of white marble, at the foot of which the river ran a vast depth down, and not to be descended on that side; the little waves still dashing and washing the foot of this rock, made the sofest murmurings and purlings in the world; and the opposite bank was adorned with such vast quantities of different flowers eternally blowing, and every day and hour new, fenced behind 'em with lofty trees of a thousand rare forms and colours, that the prospect was the most ravishing that [fancy*] can create. On the edge of this white rock, towards the river, was a walk or grove of orange and lemon trees, about half the length of the Mall here, whose flowery and fruit-bearing branches met at the top, and hindered the sun, whose rays are very fierce there, from entering a beam into the grove; and the cool air that came from the river, made it fit not only to entertain people in at all the hottest hours of the day, but refreshed the sweet blossoms, and made it always sweet and charming; and sure, the whole globe of the world cannot show so delightful a place as this grove was: not all the gardens of boasted Italy can produce a shade to outvie this, which nature had joined with art to render so exceeding fine; and 'tis a marvel to see how such vast trees, as big as English oaks, could take footing in so solid a rock, and in so little earth as covered that rock: but all things by nature there are delightful and wonderful."

That Aphra, ignoring her mother and the rest of her

* "Sands" in the original is obviously a misprint.

family, should say that this delectable place was "presented" to herself was probably dictated by vanity, and to give her as it were a more commanding position as mentor and adviser of the unhappily situated "Royal Slave." She and her people, as we gather from incidental references in *Oroonoko,* maintained something of the state befitting the family of the deceased Lieutenant-General. We learn something of their "sports" in the way of "tiger-hunting," etc.—the tiger being of course the puma —but generally only in a way to illustrate some trait of her hero. In the same book are one or two references that bear upon her own story. Thus in describing a visit to an "Indian town," eight days' barge journey up the river, she tells us that her brother and her woman, "a maid of good courage," accompanied her, and that they three whites first approached the settlement alone, leaving Cæsar (Oroonoko), the interpreter and other attendants temporarily hidden. On their appearance she says the Carib Indians set up a loud cry of wonder and amazement; "they were all naked; and we were dressed, so as is most commode for the hot countries, very glittering and rich; so that we appeared extremely fine: my own hair was cut short, and I had a taffety cap, with black feathers on my head; my brother was in a stuff suit, with silver loops and buttons and abundance of green ribbon." The account of this journey is merely episodic in the story of Oroonoko, and is introduced says the author for its incidental "proof of the curiosity and daring of this great man;" from it we learn, however, that Aphra was something of a musician, for after a feast which the Caribs had given them, "my brother and I took out our flutes, and played to 'em, which gave 'em new wonder."

On the return journey Aphra and her party appear to have got hint of an El Dorado far inland for she says that "we met with some Indians of strange aspects; that is of a larger size, and other sort of features, than those of our country. Our Indian slaves, that rowed us, asked 'em

some questions; but they could not understand us, but showed us a long cotton string, with several knots on it, and told us they had been coming from the mountains so many moons as there were knots: they were habited in skins of a strange beast, and brought along with 'em bags of gold dust; which, as well as they could give us to understand, came streaming in little small channels down the high mountains, when the rains fell; and offered to be the convoy to any body, or persons, that would go to the mountains. We carried these men up to Parham, where they were kept till the Lord Governor came. And because all the country was mad to be going on this golden adventure, the Governor, by his letters, commanded (for they sent some of the gold to him)* that a guard should be set at the mouth of the river of Amazons (a river so called, almost as broad as the river of Thames)† and prohibited all people from going up that river, it conducting to those mountains of gold. But we going off for England before the object was further prosecuted, and the Governor being drowned in a hurricane, either the design died, or the Dutch have the advantage of it: and 'tis to be bemoaned what his Majesty lost by losing that part of America." The closing sentence may be taken as one more proof as to the late date we have given for Aphra's sojourn in Surinam for we know with certainty that she was back in England before January, 1663-4. Lord Willoughby was drowned two and a half years later, time enough it might have been thought to have organized a gold-searching expedition had he chosen.

Sir Edmund Gosse who wrote the biography of Aphra Behn in the *Dictionary of National Biography,* accepted the statement that she had gone to Surinam as a child,

* This suggests that Lord Willoughby was already at Barbadoes.

† Aphra must have had an extravagant idea of the Thames, and Lord Willoughby's idea of the Amazon must have been not less hazy. The Amazon, about 500 miles south-east of the Surinam river, is described by modern geographers as having a mouth over 200 miles wide.

and, ignoring her own assertion as to having made but a short stay there, says "England resigned Surinam to the Dutch, and Aphra returned to her native country about 1658. Yet Surinam was not ceded to the Dutch until 1667, by the Treaty of Breda—and Aphra had certainly returned to England several years before that transfer of territory which she deplored.

VII

Arising as it did out of her stay in Surinam, and containing as it does some of her impressions of the country, Aphra's story of *Oroonoko the Royal Slave* may be more fittingly referred to here than at that later period in her story to which its writing and publication belong. It is the best-remembered of her writings, and even the most captious of critics could not object—as has to be objected against so much of her work—that it is marred by the license of its treatment. It is true that Dr. Bernbaum would reduce the history of the royal slave to the position of mere fiction, the "local colour" of which was all borrowed, but his "case" is by no means convincing; and if it were would heighten rather than diminish the value of the story as a literary performance. That a large part of it is pure romance may be accepted; probably but very slight suggestions and hints from her heroic original were all that she recalled for the first half of the history, and a quick imagination guiding a rapid pen did the rest. That a goodly part of the second half must have been based in fact may be taken for granted, otherwise the author would surely have given fictitious names to the people on the plantation. It is inconceivable that she could have written as she did for instance about Byam*—"a fellow whose character is not

* There is a certain confusion as to the position of this Byam for he is variously referred to as Governor, and Deputy Governor, but the latter position may have been his when Lord Willoughby was appointed Governor. According to Rodway and Watt's *Chronological History of British Guiana,* William Byam, who was then Governor,

fit to be mentioned with the worst of the slaves"—if she had not had personal knowledge, for though *Oroonoko* was written five and twenty years after the experience that inspired it, there must have been people living who knew all about those whom she lashed or lauded in the story to which we owe her impressions of Surinam. According to the author the true name of her hero—an African "Prince," whom she describes as a "Moor" though he came from the Gold Coast—was Oroonoko, but as a slave he was called Cæsar, and by that name she knew him. It is at least a coincidence that the name which he is supposed to have borne as heir to the King of Kormantyne is so nearly that of the great South American river Orinoco, which though about three hundred miles north-west of Surinam must have been familiar to Aphra by name. It is probable that seeking one as unlike as possible to those customarily bestowed on negroes on their arrival on the plantations, Aphra gave him a "native" name of her own devising, careless of the fact that the one she adopted was of Carib not Negro origin.

Before starting the story of Oroonoko the author thinks it fit to describe the way that slaves were taken to the new colonies, and naïvely indicates why it was that the native Carib Indians were not enslaved. "Those we live with in perfect amity, without daring to command 'em; but on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly affection in the world; trading with them for their fish, venison, buffalos' skins, and little rarities; as marmosets, a sort of monkey, as big as a rat or weasel, but of a marvellous and delicate shape, having face and hands like a human creature; and cousheries, a little beast in form and fashion of a lion, as big as a kitten, but so exactly made in all parts

became President when in 1654 Surinam established a Government on the model of the English Commonwealth. In 1657 he reverted to Governor. Then Johnson who was appointed Governor died on the voyage out (*supra* p. 12). Under date 1665 Byam is mentioned as Deputy Governor, and by such title Aphra always refers to him. Byam's MS. *Narrative of the State of Guiana as it stood Anno 1665* is in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, in the catalogue of which he is referred to as Governor.

like that noble beast, that it is it in miniature. Then for little ' paraketoes,' great parrots, ' muckaws,' and a thousand other birds and beasts of wonderful and surprising forms, shapes and colours. For skins of prodigious snakes, of which there are some three-score yards in length; as is the skin of one that may be seen at his Majesty's Antiquary's; where are also some rare flies, of amazing forms and colours, presented to 'em by myself; some as big as my fist, some less; and all of various excellencies, such as art cannot imitate. Then we trade for feathers, which they order into all shapes, make themselves little short habits of 'em, and glorious wreaths for their heads, necks, arms and legs, whose tinctures are unconceivable. I had a set of these presented to me, and I gave 'em to the King's Theatre, and it was the dress of the *Indian Queen*,* infinitely admired by persons of quality; and was unimitable. Besides these, a thousand little knacks, and rarities in nature; and some of art, as their baskets, weapons, aprons, etc. We dealt with 'em with beads of all colours, knives, axes, pins and needles; which they used only as tools to drill holes with in their ears, noses and lips, where they hang a great many little things; as long beads, bits of tin, brass or silver beat thin, and any shining trinket. The beads they weave into aprons about a quarter of an ell long, and of the same breadth; working them very prettily in flowers of several colours; which apron they wear just before 'em, as Adam and Eve did the fig-leaves; the men wearing a long strip of linen, which they deal with us for. They thread these beads also on long cotton threads, and make girdles to tie their aprons to, which come twenty times, or more, about the waist, and then cross, like a shoulder-belt, both ways, and round their necks, arms and legs. This adornment, with their long black hair, and the face painted in little specks or flowers here and there, makes 'em a wonderful figure to behold. Some of the beauties, which indeed are finely shaped, as

* Dryden and Howard's *The Indian Queen;* produced at the King's Theatre in January, 1663-4.

almost all are, and who have pretty features, are charming and novel; for they have all that is called beauty, except the colour, which is a reddish yellow; or after a new oiling, which they often use to themselves, they are of the colour of a new brick, but smooth, soft and sleek. They are extreme modest and bashful, very shy and nice of being touched. And though they are all thus naked, if one lives for ever among 'em, there is not to be seen an undecent action or glance: and being continually used to see one another so unadorned, so like our first parents before the Fall, it seems as if they had no wishes, there being nothing to heighten curiosity; but all you can see, you see at once, and every moment see; and where there is no novelty there can be no curiosity. . . . These people represented to me an absolute idea of the first state of innocence, before man knew how to sin: and 'tis most evident and plain, that simple nature is the most harmless, inoffensive and virtuous mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the world, than all the inventions of man: religion would here but destroy that tranquillity they possess by ignorance; and laws would but teach 'em to know offence of which now they have no notion."

Aphra concludes her account of the Carib Indians (who, by the way, were the originals of the "cannibals" of Columbus) by saying that they were such good marksmen with the bow that their arrows would split a hair, and that they customarily brought down oranges and other fruits by shooting them through the stalk; and adds that they being on all occasions very useful "we find it absolutely necessary to caress 'em as friends, and not to treat 'em as slaves; nor dare we do other, their number so far surpassing ours in that continent." The view thus expressed is scarcely that of one who was so ardent an anti-slavery writer as Swinburne suggested in a memorable passage defending "this improper woman of genius." Indeed it is impossible to avoid the feeling that Aphra's sympathies were stirred by the indignities offered

to a "prince," the woes that waited on a hero who happened to be black, rather than by the crimes committed against the slave.

The history of Oroonoko is that of an African Bayard *sans peur et sans reproche,* and while believing that Aphra Behn in presenting that history had an actual man in her memory, it must be admitted, despite her protestations, that the hand of the novelist rather than that of the historian frequently guided her pen. She described him with something of the highfalutin of the romancers of all ages: "He was pretty tall, but of a shape the most exact that can be fancied: the most famous statuary could not form the figure of a man more admirably turned from head to foot. His face was not of that brown rusty black which most of that nation are, but a perfect ebony, or polished jet. His eyes were the most awful that could be seen, and very piercing; the white of 'em being like snow, as were his teeth. His nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat. His mouth the finest shape that could be seen; far from those great turned lips, which are so natural to the rest of the negroes. The whole proportion and air of his face was so nobly and exactly formed, that bating his colour, there could be nothing in nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome. There was no one grace wanting, that bears the standard of true beauty. His hair came down to his shoulders, by the aids of art, which was by pulling it out with a quill, and keeping it combed; of which he took particular care. Nor did the perfections of his mind come short of those of his person." And so on in the superlative vein.

Sir Edmund Gosse regarded Oroonoko as "a slightly fabulous personage," and it is certainly, as we have hinted, impossible to avoid the conclusion that Aphra's protestations that she was setting forth his history "without the addition of invention" was the not uncommon trick of seeking to emphasise verisimilitude by suggestion. We must accept it that there was some exceptional individual

among the slaves whom Aphra had met or of whom she had heard while in Surinam, and of whom she had talked much after her return, and that it was this individual whose story, as remembered after quarter of a century, embroidered and romanticised, became the *History of the Royal Slave.*

By treachery was Oroonoko taken from his native Kormantyne on the Gold Coast, by treachery induced to refrain from starving himself to death—and by treachery done to death in the end. Promised his freedom on the arrival of the vessel at Surinam, he was promptly sold as a slave; "the man who bought him, was a young Cornish gentleman, whose name was Trefry; a man of great wit, and fine learning, and was carried into those parts by the Lord [Willoughby] Governor, to manage all his affairs." Trefry soon found his new slave "something greater than he confessed; and from that moment began to conceive so vast an esteem for him, that he ever after loved him as his dearest brother, and showed him all the civilities due to so great a man." All people, we are told, were in admiration of the beauty of the newcomer—"the Royal youth appeared in spite of the slave, and people could not help treating him after a different manner without designing it." Though not put to the work of a slave, he was in accordance with the custom of the plantation given a new name; "Mr. Trefry gave Oroonoko that of Cæsar; which name will live in that country as long as that (scarce more) glorious one of the great Roman: for 'tis most evident he wanted no part of the personal courage of that Cæsar, and acted things as memorable, had they been done in some part of the world replenished with people and historians, that might have given him his due. But his misfortune was, to fall in an obscure world, that afforded only a female pen to celebrate his fame."

By fellow slaves the newcomer was recognised as their prince, and hailed as king; some of them, says Aphra, "paid him even Divine Homage"! He was taken to see Clemene, "a fine she-slave" of whom blacks and whites

were both enamoured, but who had treated all alike with a noble disdain, and—romantic coincidence—she proved to be his loved wife Imoinda, who had been sold into slavery by his centenarian grandfather and rival! The joyous reunion of the two in so surprising a fashion proved the beginning of tragedy; for "in a very short time after she conceived with child, which made Cæsar (Oroonoko) even adore her, knowing he was the last of his great race. This new accident made him more impatient of liberty, and he was every day treating with Trefry for his and Clemene's (Imoinda's) liberty, and offered either gold or a vast quantity of slaves, which should be paid before they let him go, provided he could have any security that he should go when his ransom was paid. They fed him from day to day with promises, and delayed him till the Lord-Governor should come; so that he began to suspect them of falsehood, and that they would delay him till the time of his wife's delivery, and make a slave of that too: for all the breed is theirs to whom the parents belong."

The impatience of the noble captive at the delay roused fears that he might move his fellow slaves to mutiny—"which is very fatal sometimes in those colonies that abound so with slaves, that they exceed the whites in vast numbers"—and Aphra tells us that she was besought by some persons to pacify him. "They knew he and Clemene were scarce an hour in a day from my lodgings; that they eat with me, and that I obliged 'em in all things I was capable of. I entertained them with the lives of the Romans, and great men, which charmed him to my company; and her, with teaching her all the pretty works that I was mistress of, and telling her stories of nuns, and endeavouring to bring her to the knowledge of the true God. But of all discourses Cæsar liked that the worst, and would never be reconciled to our notions of the Trinity; it was a riddle he said would turn his brain to conceive, and one could not make him understand what faith was. However, these conversations failed not altogether so well to divert him,

that he liked the company of us women much above the men, for he could not drink, and he is but an ill companion in that country that cannot. So that obliging him to love us very well, we had all the liberty of speech with him, especially myself, whom he called his 'Great Mistress,' and indeed my word would go a great way with him."

The charming of Aphra, however, did not wholly reconcile the Royal Slave to the idea that his promised freedom might be postponed until after the birth of Imoinda's child; if it were ever to be gained from people of whose treachery he had had multiple experience. One Sunday (when most of the white people were under the influence of drink) he gathered the negroes of the plantation together, and proposed that they should all march off together and form a colony of their own, until they could somehow secure a ship to take them back to their own land. The result of Oroonoko's impassioned address to his fellow slaves was that the whole company, upwards of three hundred in number, with women and children and such gear as they could carry, set off to journey into the wild.

One passage from Oroonoko's address to his fellow slaves could surely not have been written by one unacquainted with plantation life; a passage which it is difficult to read unmoved to-day, indicating as it does the way in which the slave-owners "larned" their fellow men to be slaves. Aphra makes Oroonoko in rousing his countrymen—rather in the vein of Antony than Cæsar—say: "An ass, or dog, or horse, having done his duty, could lie down in retreat, and rise to work again; but men, villainous, senseless men, such as they, toiled on all the tedious week till *Black Friday*: and then, whether they worked or not, whether they were faulty or meriting, they, promiscuously, the innocent with the guilty, suffered the infamous whip, the sordid stripes, from their fellow slaves, till the blood trickled from all parts of their body; blood whose every drop ought to be revenged with a life of some of those tyrants that impose it." This indicates a horrid origin of the term "Black

Friday" that has been overlooked by the compilers of our reference books.

Oroonoko's attempt to lead his fellow Africans from the land of their bondage was doomed to failure, more perhaps by the weakness of his fellows than the power of his pursuers. The colony was roused on finding that the Parham slaves had fled and the pursuit began under the vindictive Deputy-Governor Byam, the fleeing ones being soon overtaken. During the fight that at once began the negro women and children ran into the mêlée exhorting their menfolk to yield and give up "Cæsar." Oroonoko and his Imoinda and one trusty friend, Tuscan, refused to yield, but were at last persuaded to do so on Byam's promise of full pardon and friendliness. No sooner however were they back at the plantation than Oroonoko and Tuscan were seized, bound to stakes and whipped "in a most deplorable and inhuman manner, rending the very flesh from their bones, especially Cæsar"; then his executioners "led him bleeding and naked as he was, and loaded him all over with irons, and then rubbed his wounds, to complete their cruelty, with Indian pepper, which had like to have made him raving mad; and, in this condition, made him so fast to the ground, that he could not stir, if his pains and wounds would have given him leave."

The wretched Oroonoko, under the last indignity of the lash, resolves to be avenged on Byam, to live to the end of attaining revenge and then to die. Thoughts of the possible fate of Imoinda and their coming child tortured him, and at length he came to the appalling resolve to kill his wife to save her from the later vengeance of the whites. With the grim resolution of a coloured Virginius, and the consent of the victim, he does the deed, and then in a state of madness cannot tear himself away. Days later, emaciated and almost dying, he was discovered, but rather than be taken again, for Aphra spares us nothing, "he ripped up his own belly and took his bowels and pulled 'em out with what strength he could." He was, however, secured, taken

to Parham House and nursed back to life—only to fall a victim to Byam's final treachery during the absence of Oroonoko's most powerful friends—Trefry and Aphra herself.

When Oroonoko met his terrible fate, being tied to a stake and cut up piecemeal, Aphra records "my mother and sister were by him all the while, but not suffered to save him; so rude and wild were the rabble, and so inhuman were the Justices who stood by to see the execution." Aphra was on her way three days' journey down the river to visit Colonel Martin, "an English gentleman, brother to Harry Martin, the great Oliverian," having been "persuaded to leave the place for some time (being myself but sickly, and very apt to fall into fits of dangerous illness upon any extraordinary melancholy)." Byam had taken Trefry somewhere up the river and left the carrying out of his design "to one Banister, a wild Irishman, and one of the Council, a fellow of absolute barbarity, and fit to execute any villainy, but rich."

However much Aphra Behn may have borrowed, as Dr. Bernbaum shows that she did, from printed sources, it can only have been to refresh her memories of quarter of a century earlier; the tragic tale of Oroonoko embodies statements which could not have been made by one merely pretending to have been in Surinam. She could not, as we have said, have written of Deputy-Governor Byam as she did, she could not have spoken of the Surinam flies (presumably butterflies) in the Royal collection as having been presented by herself, she could not have contributed to the "properties" of the King's Theatre those feather garments which were worn in *The Indian Queen,* and contributed to a stage setting that won the commendation of both John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. And, furthermore, in the dedication of one of her plays, *The Young King,* Aphra refers to her American experience (see p. 61).

VIII

It must have been, as we have shown, some time in 1663 —probably in the later half of the year—that Aphra returned to England, and it may be assumed that the other members of the family came at the same time. Of them we know next to nothing. A brother and a sister are casually mentioned, as we have seen, in *Oroonoko,* and of them we find no later mention; her mother is just as casually referred to in the same book, and to her we find but one or two slight references after the return.

We have cited part of a wonderful sentence from the anonymous "one of the fair sex" who wrote the early tantalisingly sketchy "life and memoir" of Aphra Behn. It comes as conclusion to what the writer terms "a vindication of her from some unjust aspersions I find are insinuated about this town in relation to that prince [Oroonoko]," and runs thus: "As this is false, so are the consequences of it too; for the Lord [Willoughby], her father's friend, that was not then arrived, perished in a hurricane, without having it in his power to resent it*: nor had his resentment been anything to her, who only waited the arrival of the next ships to convey her back to her desired England; where she soon after, to her satisfaction, arrived, and gave King Charles II so pleasant and rational an account of his affairs there, and particularly of the misfortunes of Oroonoko, that he desired her to deliver them publicly to the world, and was satisfied of her abilities in the management of business, and the fidelity of our heroine to his interest."

That very loosely constructed and not very lucidly ex-

* There is fine confusion here, with an implication that the "unjust aspersions" were insinuated while Aphra was still in Surinam; Aphra was back in London before the end of 1663; Lord Willoughby was drowned in July, 1666; the unjust aspersions were probably not heard of before the publication of *Oroonoko* in 1688!

pressed sentence implies that Aphra was in a social position to go to Court, though her biographers have assumed that it was only after her marriage that she did so. As to the King's having proposed that one whose literary ability was yet to be made evident should write the history of Oroonoko, if Charles did so then the author was about five and twenty years in obeying the royal behest. Had he done so, her extant laudations suggest that she would assuredly have stated the fact on producing the story, however belatedly. In that story she does tell us that after her return to England she presented to the royal collection certain rare flies of amazing forms and colours that she had brought with her from Surinam and that she gave to the King's Theatre feather garments and ornaments of the Carib Indians in time for their use in *The Indian Queen* in January, 1664, and Evelyn says " the play was so beautiful with rich scenes as the like had never been seen here."* How she came to be in touch with Court and theatre can only be surmised.

Aphra at this time was in the prime of early womanhood; she was, as may be gathered from her portraits, graceful, comely, with brown hair and bright eyes, she was described by one of the fair sex as being both beautiful and witty, and with her portraits and her works before us the description may be accepted. That she had esprit, that combination of sprightliness and charm, it is easy to believe. That she had broken-hearted lovers before reaching the age when she was likely to be able to spell l-o-v-e it is suggested, and at least one lover on her return from the West Indies is vaguely implied,—other that is than the man whom she married. Somewhere or somewhen, Aphra Amis or Aphra Johnson, or Aphra Amis known as Johnson, married " Mr. Behn, a merchant of this city, though of Dutch extraction." That is all the early friendly biographer has to say on the matter, and later research has

* The dresses were used again in Dryden's play *The Indian Emperor* early in 1665.

not added to knowledge on the point.* Sir Edmund Gosse, in the *D.N.B.*, after surmising that Aphra returned to her native country about 1658, continues "she presently married a city merchant named Behn, a gentleman of Dutch extraction. It appears that through her marriage she gained an entrance to the Court, and that she amused Charles II with her sallies and her eloquent descriptions. Her married life, during which she seems to have been wealthy, was brief. Before 1666 she was a widow."

Her wedded life must, indeed, have been briefer than Sir Edmund Gosse thought. The earliest date at which her marriage can be assumed to have taken place is the beginning of 1664, and she was, we have presumptive evidence, a widow by the summer of 1666. Miss Sackville-West ingeniously suggests that Behn may have died during the plague visitation of 1665, when as we learn from Pepys six or seven thousand people a week were carried off by it in London. At any rate, it is fairly certain that before the summer of 1666 Aphra—now Aphra Behn—was a widow. Whether her husband left her well-off or otherwise is uncertain, indeed beyond the hint at a comfortable position implied in the description of him as a "merchant" the statement that he was wealthy and the means of introducing his wife to Court are assumptions; whether there was any child of the marriage cannot now be said—presumably not, for Aphra's friend could scarcely have overlooked such a detail in her romantic essay in biography. We are told, however, that another Dutchman *"whom we must call by the name of Vander Albert of Utrecht"* had "in her husband's time been in love with her in England." Though "Vander Albert" is thus directly referred to by Aphra's friend as a *nomme-de-guerre,* his name and nationality have

* Only one man of the name of Behn have we traced in the State papers of the period. It is recorded under date of May 2, 1655, that when the Hamburg *King David* was seized "for coming to Barbadoes contrary to the Act," John Behn was the name of one of the vessel's principal officers, but even of him we find no further mention. It is, at least, curious that the name should be found in association with West Indies affairs.

been accepted as historical by most writers. Yet there is evidence that goes to show who the man camouflaged as Vander Albert really was, and at the same time to suggest who the lover in England may possibly have been.

IX

In reaching that period in Aphra Behn's life which may be termed the brief interlude in Antwerp, we are, despite the conflict of testimony which is common to most parts of her story, on ground that is a little firmer—at any rate in parts. Her own intentional romancing when writing of her personal experiences in the Netherlands can to some extent be checked and clarified by reference to the official documents which she wrote during her stay there.

According to the *D.N.B.* "when the Dutch war broke out Charles II thought her a proper person to be entrusted with secret State business, and she was sent over to Antwerp by the Government as a spy." According to the original biographer the King "committed to her secresy and conduct, affairs of the highest importance in the Dutch War." Now England had been actually warring on the Dutch colonies for eighteen months before formally declaring war in March 1665, and Aphra was not sent abroad until July 1666, by which time she was a widow. The fact that her husband had been Dutch, and that she may have known something of the language, as well as French, which she claims to have known, may have had weight in her selection. Miss Sackville-West suggests that her stay in Surinam may have been thought to have given her valuable experiences of the Dutch, and the same view had been put forward as early as 1707 in the *Muses' Mercury*; against it may be set the fact that in *Oroonoko* Aphra makes no mention of any Dutch being then at Surinam, and the colonial rivalry of England and Holland at the time makes their presence there unlikely. Each of these things might have been regarded as emphasising her suitability, but there

seems to us little doubt that Aphra Behn went to Antwerp not as a spy as has been repeatedly stated, but as an agent for one specific purpose, to get in touch with a certain person, and to induce him, owing to his personal regard for her, to become a spy in Holland in the interests of his native country. The last of the letters which Aphra sent home from Antwerp appears to establish this beyond question, more particularly when that letter is read in relation with a passage in the original memoir.

The writer of that original memoir, aware as we have seen that "Vander Albert" was a disguise name, is almost as romantic as Aphra herself over this episode: "Antwerp is a city of opulence and compass, and before the separation of the seven provinces from the other ten, was the emporium of Flanders, and is yet a town of considerable trade and resort; 'tis in the Spanish Netherlands, and yet near neighbour to the dominions of the States [Holland]. For which reason our Astrea chose it for the place of her abode, where she might with the greater ease hear from and meet with Vander Albert; who, before the war, in her husband's time, had been in love with her in England, and on which she grounded the success of her negotiation. Albert, as soon as he knew of her arrival at Antwerp, and the public posts he was in would give him leave, made a short voyage to meet her, with all the love his nature was capable of (and which by chance was much, and more refined than most of his countrymen, at least according to our common notions of 'em) and after a repetition of all his former professions for her service, pressed her extremely to let him, by some signal means, give undeniable proofs of the vehemence and sincerity of his passion; for which he would ask no reward, till he had by long and faithful service, convinced her that he deserved it."

We are then told how Vander Albert visiting Astrea one day towards the close of 1666 gave her news of the greatest moment, which she promptly sent on to the English Government. This news was of the Dutch plans for

sailing up the Thames and destroying the shipping there. But for the invented name of Vander Albert the story is borne out by Astrea's own letters from Antwerp to the foreign minister and others, though by that curious fatality which appears to attend on all who write of Aphra Behn, both Mr. Montague Summers and Miss Sackville-West, have not only overlooked the document but deny its existence.

Of the many Englishmen who for one reason or another, mostly from sympathy with the superseded Commonwealth, had expatriated themselves after the Restoration, a number had joined an English regiment of mercenaries in the Dutch service, and among the officers of that regiment was one William Scott, a younger son of Thomas Scott the regicide, who had been executed in June 1660, and brother of Colonel Thomas Scott who after being arrested in Ireland in 1663 for being concerned in a plot turned King's evidence. When William Scott fled from England we do not know; it may well have been that he and his brother went to Ireland together, possibly at the time of the Restoration, or on their father's execution; or that he joined his brother there when the 1663 plot was in the making. We do know that when a Proclamation drawn up on March 26, 1666, was promulgated on April 9 of the fourteen persons "warned home," the first was William Scott, son of Sir Thomas Scott, executed for high treason, and that others in the list were persons of no less importance than Algernon Sidney and Richard Cromwell. In what way, other than as being the son of his father, William Scott had made himself objectionable to the authorities cannot be said.

As Aphra Behn emphatically says—in an official letter not in a romance—that she was the only person in the world who could have drawn William Scott into the service of King Charles, it is fair to assume that he was the lover on whom the name of Vander Albert was bestowed.* We *know* that he was the agent through whom she was

* In the *D.N.B.* article on Thomas Scott, Aphra Behn is bluntly described as the mistress of his son William; but this is scarcely

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enabled to transmit the hint of De Witt's contemplated *coup,* and we gather from one of her letters to Lord Arlington that the main purpose of her stay in Antwerp was to win William Scott, with promise of pardon for past offences, whatever they may have been, in reward for his secret service work.

From the time when she went to Antwerp, Astrea came to represent Aphra Behn. It was her secret service or "spy" name, and the possibility that William Scott was not only a lover, but that he was promised marriage as an incidental reward for his services, may be gathered from the fact that his nominal "spy" disguise was Celadon. It has not hitherto been noted that Astrea and Celadon are the names of the principal characters in what has been described as "the most romantic novel that has ever been written," the *Astrée* of Honoré d'Urfé, which had been first published over half a century earlier and had appeared in English translations, the first part in 1620, and the amazing whole —it runs to about 1,300,000 words—in three fine folio volumes, 1657-8, with prefaces to the first two by John Dryden. It cannot be without significance that Aphra fixed the names of Astrea and Celadon on herself and Scott; the doing so was a romantic acceptance of an anticipated repetition of a marriage proposal, for it is notable that towards the close of the great romance where, as not infrequently, d'Urfé breaks into verse, we find

> "Receive Celadon that
> Happiness which Heaven does offer thee.
> Astrea is the reward of all thy pains; and
> That heart which has so long mutinied against thee
> Shall never more oppose thy constancy."

It is also notable that one of the earliest pieces in Aphra Behn's *Poems* is *A Farewell to Celladon, on his going into*

possible, unless it was during the months immediately preceding the proclamation of April 1666. It is possible that he had been an early lover of Aphra's, who was twenty at the time of the Restoration when it appears most likely that Scott would have gone abroad.

Ireland, but it is impossible to say to whom the name there applied.

Aphra journeyed to the Low Countries in company with Sir Antony Desmarces, who was the British resident at Bruges. In the first of her official letters from Antwerp Astrea naïvely says that she had acquainted Sir Antony with her business, and been advised by him not to cross the frontier into Holland. She duly met her Celadon (William Scott), who was not long in showing himself anxious by doing secret service work to win forgiveness for past offences. That those offences had been merely political is evident from Aphra's somewhat paradoxical description of him (under the alias of Vander Albert) as "an irreconcilable enemy to monarchy" and yet as being won to the King's service by the force of love for herself.

That first of her official letters was dated from Antwerp on August 6, 1666, and in it Aphra described how she had taken a coach and gone a day's journey with Celadon for an opportunity of speaking to him in sufficient privacy. She had succeeded in winning him to extreme willingness to take service, and he had suggested resigning his place in the troops and getting a position in which he could be more serviceable. She thought it might be necessary for her to go to the Hague, as Celadon had suggested that she might secure there the information he had promised to obtain. She added that she wanted money, having already spent that which she had taken with her. Poor Aphra was early to find that "the eternal want of pence that vexes public men" spread its vexation far among those who were employed in the public service during the reign of the Second Charles. On August 27 she writes again that she has been unable to do anything so far but (as "Mr. Nipho and Sir Antony" can witness) it is a hard matter, and she "dare not for her life go to Holland." She sends a few items of Dutch news, and then, complaining of the expensiveness of the place, begs that money shall be sent, as she has been forced to pawn a ring to pay her messengers. A note to her from

William Scott at Rotterdam acquaints her with the news that there is a general expectation of something breaking out, but he dare not say much lest his letter miscarry, and would like to meet her, though it must not be at the Hague —which was doubtless gratifying, seeing that something which she had heard made the prospect of passing into Holland an unpleasant one.

On the last day of August Aphra Behn writes that she has seen Scott and describes him as seeming earnest in his wish to serve and wanting not wit nor address, but only money. He will do nothing further without full authority but should be encouraged and assured of his pardon. These earlier letters had all been addressed to Mr. Halsall, who was cup-bearer to the King. On the same day as the latest of them was written, poor Aphra wrote also to Thomas Killigrew, who was not only a one-time diplomat, a playwright and manager of Drury Lane Theatre, but also Groom of the Bedchamber to King Charles. She was, she said, obliged to trouble him, for she could get no reply from Halsall, and apparently wrote to Killigrew in the hope that her information might through one of them reach the King himself. Celadon she says is most ready to serve his Majesty, but fears being ill dealt with as all the King's friends there complain of the slenderness of their rewards; yet he tells her everything on her bare word, as confidently as if he had the King's great seal. He must have money, for though the States [of Holland] profess great esteem for the English troops, they have not paid them, and Bampfield himself [their commander] is out of money. She declares that she dares not go to Holland for fear of Bampfield's jealousy, which rather suggests that the colonel commanding the English regiment in the service of the Dutch was also one of England's secret service men; also that she had twice had to give Scott £10 to come to her. To Killigrew, too, she complains of the great expenses to which she was put, having to spend ten guilders a day.

Of one Thomas Corney, then at Antwerp, she says that he

talks of being "employed"—that is, in the British service, —and "boasts as though he were the King's right hand," but he talks such rhodomantades as to be dangerous to trust; while matters were further complicated by Corney's threat to kill Scott if he came to Antwerp again! One can only surmise that the charming Aphra had fascinated Mr. Thomas Corney and that his threat was inspired by jealousy, for not knowing her business he could not know that of William Scott. It appears to us that William Scott is indubitably disguised as Vander Albert in Aphra's romance-letters concerning her Antwerp lovers and it may be conjectured that the bulky Vander Bruin whom she there ludicrously delineates may have been meant as a Dutch disguise for Thomas Corney.*

She finishes her letter to Killigrew by saying that she must have money, being in debt nearly £30, and needing more than £50 if she is to go to Holland. Four days later, and again she is writing to Killigrew that want of money will make her incapable of being of any service, and saying that she has had to pawn her very rings to get Scott there, and the place is so dear that she has been unable to buy so much as a shoe to travel in. She is in urgent need of £100 to pay her debts and enable her to go to the Hague.

During September Aphra Behn was able to send an item of news which should of itself have far more than justified her sojourn in Antwerp, had the authorities at home but realised its import. To this, however, we will return later. Again come complaints of Halsall's silence, and the way in which any service she might do is hampered by want of money. She had evidently been reproached for sending an unsuitable messenger to Whitehall, for in this letter she defends herself for having sent for money by a servant, who, though a mean fellow, was neither a cheat nor a traitor; but her mother was unfit to come, and Sir Thomas

* From the State Papers we learn that in 1669 Thomas Corney was back in England, and praying for a place in the Ordnance—he is reduced to the lowest ebb and has had his clothes stolen from his lodging!

was seldom in town. Where her mother was and who Sir Thomas was are alike undiscoverable. She goes on to say that she will mind what she is about diligently—how great a child so ever she may be in other matters! A few days later and she tacitly acknowledges receipt of a letter by saying that Scott is overjoyed with the promise of his pardon and "will serve more fully when it has arrived, for till then he fears lest he may ruin himself with both sides." She complains of Thomas Corney as an "unsufferable, scandalous, lying, prating fellow," and says that not being able to find out her business, he abuses and threatens to kill Scott, and writes to everybody in Holland that Scott visits her, while he himself comes daily to visit her, talking at such a rate of his employments, the ladies at Court, etc., that she has hardly patience to hear his rhodomontade.

The fair secret service agent, stranded in Antwerp, found herself getting in greater difficulties and apparently all appeals for adequate assistance ignored. On November 3 she wrote directly to Lord Arlington pointing out that she had gone to Flanders on his lordship's business, and declaring that no other person in the world could have drawn William Scott into the business, yet to her repeated letters begging for encouragement for him and for supplies she could get no answers. Scott has now been cast in prison, and for want of money can neither get at his papers nor go to the Hague, while she, having fooled him so long, now dares not write to him. She herself is in debt and extreme want, having pawned all she had, and is likely to be put in prison, and has to beg that she may not be left to be ruined and disgraced in a strange place.

Then on December 26 she wrote, again to Lord Arlington, the last of the letters that have been preserved in the Record Office. Declaring that if she did not know the justness of her cause she would be wild with her harsh treatment, she applied to him as her last hope. The delay had caused her twice the expense she would have had, for as she would not beg or starve she had had to get credit.

She must have a bill for £100 of which her friend (Scott) should have part, and could not return without it. She did not desire the place she had been given, nor the voyage and must return by the next convoy or would have to stay another two months.

King Charles, Lord Arlington, Cup-bearer Halsall, and Groom-of-the-Bedchamber Killigrew all ignored poor Astrea's appeals, and it was left to her to raise by borrowing the money necessary to pay her Antwerp debts and get back to England. The loan was raised from one Edward Butler, of London; her mother or some friend presumably acting as her agent. It was not until the spring of 1667 that she finally got away and travelling to Dunkirk thence took ship for London. One of her fellow-passengers was Sir Bernard Gascoigne, and as his pass to return to England was dated March 11, she could not have returned before then, though her latest biographer says she returned in January.

We are probably right in suggesting that Aphra had engaged herself to marry William Scott, and it may be hoped that the funds she had raised permitted of her sending money to release him from prison. Her original biographer says of Vander Albert that after taking leave of her he returned into Holland "to make all things all ready for his voyage to England, and matrimony, died at Amsterdam of a fever." Aphra in a letter to a friend said of Vander Albert "I shall say no more of this lover till I see you, for some particular reasons which you shall then likewise know." She could not, of course, explain that it was really William Scott and that she had engaged herself to marry him when his pardon permitted of his return home. It is probable that it is his end that is hinted at in that of Vander Albert, for the State Papers have nothing for us about William Scott after Aphra's departure from Antwerp.

X

Of Astrea's return voyage from Dunkirk to England a fantastic story is told by her first biographer, who says that on the way "she met with a strange appearance, that was visible to all the passengers and ship's crew. Sir Bernard Gascoigne had brought with him from Italy several admirable telescopes and 'prospective-glasses'; and looking through one of them, when the day was very calm and clear, espied a strange apparition floating on the water, which was also seen by all in their turns that looked through it: which made 'em conclude that they were painted glasses that were put at the ends on purpose to surprise and amuse those that look through 'em; till after having taken 'em out, rubbed, and put 'em in again, they found the same thing floating toward the ship, and which was now come so near as to be within view without the glass. I have often heard her assert, that the whole company saw it. The figure was this: A four-square floor of various-coloured marble, from which ascended rows of fluted and twisted pillars, embossed round with climbing vines and flowers, and waving streamers, that received an easy motion from the air; upon the pillars a hundred little cupids clambered with fluttering wings. This strange pageant came almost near enough for one to step out of the ship into it before it vanished; after which, and a short calm, followed so violent a storm, that having driven the ship upon the coasts, she split in sight of land: but the people, by help of the inhabitants, and boats from shore, were all saved, and our Astrea arrived safe, though tired, to London, from a voyage that gained her more reputation than profit."

It is very likely that those "prospective glasses" of Sir Bernard Gascoigne's carried the wonderful picture within them, and that the conversion of that picture into an apparition was either Aphra's exaggeration for testing the credulity of her friend or that friend's embroidering of a misremem-

bered story; as also it would seem was the story of the wrecking of the vessel from which the wonder had been seen.

XI

With the return from Antwerp the story of Aphra Behn's travels comes to a close, though not the trouble consequent thereon. Before passing on to the next stage in her career it is necessary that we should revert to a matter touched upon a few pages earlier. This is the important news which she was able to send concerning a project of the Dutch enemy; for which service says her early biographer "the ancients would have decreed her a triumph." This project was the blocking of the Thames by the sinking of shipping in it, how it was duly and disastrously carried out may be read in some panic-stricken pages of Pepys. That Aphra sent early news of this threat and was laughed at for her pains has been mentioned by all who have written about her for upwards of two centuries.

Mr. Montague Summers in his memoir* relegates reference to this matter to a footnote: "There do not appear to be any grounds for the oft-repeated assertion that Mrs. Behn communicated the intelligence when the Dutch were planning an attack (afterwards carried out) on the Thames and Medway squadrons, and that her warning was scoffed at." Miss Sackville-West† is more emphatic: "A regular farrago of romance comes to blur the sharp outlines which her letters have, for once, given us. The author of the *Life and Memoirs* is, of course, to blame. There is, first of all, the story that Mrs. Behn gave her Government warning of the projected Dutch attack upon the Thames and the Medway, but this story, for historical and chronological reasons into the detail of which I need not enter, may be at once dismissed. Mrs. Behn, to put it briefly, could not have

* *The Works of Aphra Behn*, vol. I xxiv. 1915.
† *Aphra Behn, the Incomparable Astrea*, p. 37.

known of the Dutch attack, since it was not planned until several months after she had left Antwerp."

It is to be regretted that the latest writers on Aphra Behn who have cleared up so many points in her very difficult story should have thus introduced a new item of confusion. In the State Papers of the time of Charles II, Domestic Series, is given the contents of a letter from William Scott to Aphra Behn. The letter, which is dated from Rotterdam, September 12/22, 1666, says that "Thomas Woodman, a Parliament captain, is much with Doleman and De Witt, and *undertakes to sink ships and block up the Thames; he is sent to the Dutch fleet* with Sidrach Lester, a notorious rogue." The fact that the Dutch did not make their attack on the Thames until the following June does not detract from, but rather adds to, the importance of the news which Astrea and Celadon had sent. How far it is true that the news was received with derision it is impossible to say, nor do we know to whom it was directed by Aphra Behn; had it reached the Navy Board we should surely have had some mention of the fact from Samuel Pepys. Though much has been said of the neglect of the authorities to make preparations for meeting the threatened attack, it has to be recalled that the letter of Celadon's must have reached London when the city was in ruins, still smouldering indeed from the Great Fire, and at a time too when the Navy authorities were distracted in their efforts to get money with which to carry on. But, again, those matters in no wise detract from the importance of the timely warning which did reach the English Government as a result of Aphra Behn's stay in Antwerp and her renewed relations with William Scott.

XII

Of a series of romantic letters included in the early *Life and Memoirs,* and there spoken of as having been written by Aphra while in Antwerp, Mr. Montague Summers says

" it would seem that all this pure fiction, the sweepings of Aphra's deck, was intended by her to have been worked up into a novel." We would rather suggest that these letters may be regarded as her first essays in fiction—some of them notably founded in fact. The first two of the letters indeed bear upon them the stamp of having been written under recent annoyance such as that of learning that the information she had transmitted had been belittled and ignored. Thus:

" My dear Friend,—Your remarks upon my politic capacity, though they are sharp, touch me not but recoil on those that have not made use of the advantages they might have drawn from thence; and are doubly to blame: first, in sending a person, in whose ability, sense, and veracity, they could not confide; and next, not to understand when a person indifferent tells 'em a probable story, and which if it come to pass, would sufficiently punish their incredulity; and which, if followed, would have put them on their guard against a vigilant and industrious foe, who watched every opportunity of returning the several repulses, and damages, they had met with of late from them. But I have often observed your busy young statesmen, so very opinionated of their own designs, that they are so far from encouraging those of another, if good, that they cannot forgive their proposal, and sacrifice a public good to their particular pride.

" But I have let these idle reflections (for such must all be that regard our wretched statesmen) divert me from a more agreeable relation. To comply therefore with your request, in its full extent, I shall give you an account of both my own adventures, and those of a lady of my acquaintance, and with her I'll begin, for 'tis but civil to give place to a stranger. I shall convey her to your knowledge by the name of Lucilla. She is of a gay, airy disposition, middle sized, fine black eyes, long flowing dark hair. Nature has drawn her eye-brows, which are dark, much

finer than art usually does those of the affected beauties of our acquaintance; her mouth is small, her lips plump, ruddy and fresh, I won't say moist; her hand small, fingers long and taper, and her shape better than is usual among the Flemish ladies: to this I must add, that her wit is much above the common rate."

We have copied the second of those paragraphs from a suspicion that Aphra was pleasing herself by drawing as the portrait of her first heroine, the portrait of herself, for the description might well be that of the painting of her by Sir Peter Lely. Of the little romance so introduced we need say no more. The second of the letters, introducing her *affaires* with Vander Albert and Vander Bruin, to which reference has before been made, still indicates hurt feelings: "Though our courtiers will not allow me to do any great matters with my politics, I am sure you must grant, that I have done so with my eyes, when I shall tell you I have made two Dutchmen in love with me." That Vander Albert was William Scott may be accepted, as we have shown, with some degree of certainty, that Vander Bruin was also a romance-name Aphra herself makes plain and that it represented her annoying visitor Thomas Corney may well be believed. Her disguising them as Dutchmen in letters mostly of a ridiculous and romantic character was necessary if it be admitted, as we see no reason to doubt, that they were actually written by Aphra Behn when in Antwerp. We know very little of her friendships and it is highly probable that they were at once her first essays in romance writing and written for the entertainment of a friend at home.

XIII

After recording Aphra's return to London—a London more or less completely wiped out by the appalling conflagration of September 1666—her early biographer says airily "the rest of her life was entirely dedicated to pleasure

and poetry,"—and thus passed over a vexatious period, possibly from ignorance; and possibly from thinking that its sordid details did not harmonise with the romantic note of the memoir.

When Aphra returned from Surinam about the autumn of 1663 she had been in a position to be received at Court and to entertain the King with her talk; when she returned from Antwerp in the spring of 1667, after her brief exploit as "spy," it was to find herself in very different circumstances, in the position of a necessarily importunate creditor. Confident, no doubt, that on reaching London she would forthwith be paid at least the sum which she had borrowed to pay her expenses, she must have soon met with disillusion. There were probably many appeals, personal and other, to Halsall, Killigrew and other potencies about the palace, probably many promises unfulfilled, as the months passed and Edward Butler became more and more pressing for payment.

Aphra had been absent for about eight months and the whole expense of her journey—including payments to Scott and the interest doubtless included in the amount due to Butler—had been within £200; no very extravagant outlay such as might have justified delay in its repayment. She, as creditor of the Court, could but importune for payment, but her creditor could exert legal power to enforce his claim; and it is with this matter that a further batch of papers in the Record Office is concerned. The papers consist of three petitions to the King for payment of this debt incurred in his service. These pathetic documents, all undated, are classified as belonging to the year 1668, and may be surely ascribed to the autumn of that year. They are sad indications that pleasure and poetry did not attend on the early part of Aphra's return. How she was living at the time, it is impossible to say; she had not yet turned to literature for a livelihood and had it is evident no wealthy friends to save her from the consequences of the cynical disregard of her appeals by the King and his henchmen.

The first of the petitions is for an order to Mr. May [Keeper of the Privy Purse], or Mr. Chiffinch [page and closet-keeper to the King] for the money due, she being threatened by Butler with an execution. Then comes another petition for an order that Mr. Edward Butler be paid £150, as he threatens to use all severity with her if the amount is not paid within a week. Mr. Halsall and Mr. Killigrew, she points out, know how justly the amount is due. To this petition is annexed the following letter which was evidently written a few days later, the week of grace having minished to a day. It is addressed to Thomas Killigrew. We have thought well here as elsewhere to modernise the spelling.

"Sir,—If you could guess at the affliction of my soul you would, I am sure, pity me, 'tis to-morrow that I must submit myself to a prison, the time being expired, and though I endeavoured all day yesterday to get a few days more, I can not because they say, they see I am dallied with all, and so, they say, I shall be for ever. So I cannot revoke my doom. I have cried myself dead, and could find in my heart to break through all, and get to the King, and never rise till he were pleased to pay this; but I am sick and weak and unfit for it; or a prison. I shall go to-morrow. But I will send my mother to the King with a petition, for I see everybody are words; and I will not perish in a prison, from whence he swears I shall not stir till the utmost farthing be paid. Oh God, who considers my misery and charges too, this is my reward for all my great promises, and my endeavours. Sir, if I have not the money to-night you must send me something to keep me in prison, for I will not starve. A. Behn."

Neither the petition nor the piteous letter brought eleventh hour relief, and Edward Butler took the seemingly ruthless way of enforcing his claim, and is, maybe, less to be blamed than the King and the King's agents—theirs

was cynical indifference to the just claim to recompense of one who had done a service; his was a harsh method set up by the law and one which he may well have thought would bring Aphra's patrons to the point of paying up. That she was duly placed in one or other of the hideously crowded debtors' prisons—probably one of those temporarily established to take the place of the Fleet and other prisons destroyed in the great Fire—we learn from the last of the papers preserved in the Record Office.

This was yet another petition in which Fyhare* Behn pleads to the King not to let her suffer for what was done for his Majesty, but to order the payment of £150 to Edward Butler, who, on Lord Arlington declaring that he had neither money nor orders about it, threw her into prison.

We do not know of the particular prison into which she was thrown, nor how long she remained there, nor whether Thomas Killigrew sent her the wherewithal to keep her from starving while there. Her talk of sending her mother to plead personally with the King suggests that her mother was living in London, and it is possible that Aphra had been living with her when removed to the debtors' prison. That the mother was not in circumstances to provide the unfortunate daughter with the necessities of life while in durance, may also be gathered from the letter.

XIV

Aphra Behn's incarceration must take us to the close of 1668, if not to the early part of 1669. The extremity to which Butler had pushed his unhappy debtor would appear to have justified itself from his point of view, and the debt was presumably soon paid off, for though dates are unobtainable it is accepted that her period in prison was but

* That this is not a genuine variant of the name, but a misreading of an agitatedly written Aphra, may be gathered from a careful consideration of her autograph.

a short one. Somebody saw to it at long last that Astrea's claim should be paid, and it is pleasant to think that the agent finally successful in doing so may have been Thomas Killigrew; at any rate Aphra was to write of him in later years in commendatory terms.

From what kind of home it was that Aphra passed to a debtors' prison—and to what kind of home she returned on her happy release—cannot be said. Mr. Summers suggests that when the troublesome £150 was paid there may have been something added thereto as reward to Aphra for her work in Antwerp or as something of a solatium for her sufferings since. It would be pleasant to think that it was so, but there is no evidence in support of it, and the dilatory payment of the amount claimed (which, it may be stressed as evidence of Aphra's ungrasping nature at a time when as Pepys shows us everybody was "on the make," was only that for out-of-pocket expenses) does not indicate any likelihood of there having been any comfortable addition when payment was finally made. Mr. Summers thinks also that in this year 1669 Aphra Behn, with the resolution of never again being reduced to the straits she had recently experienced, "accepted the protection of some admirer." Here, again, there is really nothing but surmise to go upon—surmise coloured by the later reputation attached to Aphra's name. The matter is one to which we shall return later.

It is more in accordance with the probabilities of the case that Aphra had already found a means of turning her literary gifts to account, although, unfortunately, we have had to be the means of destroying the one piece of evidence which appeared to show that she had actually done so. In the Catalogue of the British Museum Aphra Behn was, and in the *D.N.B.* is, credited with having rendered into English verse the English portion of a tri-lingual presentation in a handsome folio of the *Fables of Æsop* published in 1666. Examination of the volume shows however that she had nothing whatever to do with that edition. Her version

APHRA BEHN

From an engraving after the painting by John Riley

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of *Æsop* belongs to the close of her literary career, not to its commencement.

That Aphra Behn had practised her pen while in Antwerp may we feel confident be accepted though whether anything that she wrote then was published cannot be established. Possibly the romantic love letters were written then and sent to friends in England. It was not, it would appear, until after returning to England and finding the difficulty of getting money due from the Royal purse that she was faced with the problem of having to fend for herself, and in view of her later literary activity it is no more unreasonable to suppose that she took to writing, than it is to assume that in the looseness of her own life she qualified herself to write lewdly for the stage from experience when opportunity offered. So much at least may be recognised without in any way seeming to attempt the thankless task of smothering over two centuries of glib slander with whitewash. The truth of the matter is that Aphra Behn's reputation is based on two or three scurrilous passages in the satiric literature of her later years; passages in which it appears to have been assumed—merely on the principle that "who drives fat oxen should himself be fat"—that she who wrote lewdly must perforce have lived lewdly.

Thus in *A Satire on the Modern Translators* published in 1684—and attributed to Matthew Prior, who was then a student of twenty at Cambridge—it is written of "our blind translatress Behn":

> "The female wit, who next convicted stands,
> Not for abusing Ovid's verse but Sand's:
> She might have learned from the ill-borrowed grace,
> (Which little helps the ruin of her face),
> That wit, like beauty, triumphs o'er the heart
> When more of nature's seen, and less of art:
> Nor strive in Ovid's letters to have shown
> As much of skill, as lewdness in her own.

Then let her from the next inconstant Lover,
Take a new copy for a second Rover.
Describe the cunning of a jilting whore,
From the ill arts herself has used before;
Thus let her write, but paraphrase no more."

This is obviously an attack on the writer through her writing, the satirist assuming for the making of his points that the dramatist had herself been a principal in such intrigues as those which she devised for stage purposes. The reference to the "lewdness in her own" letters is curious, as at the time of the publication of this satire nothing of hers is known to have been published beyond plays, and the epistle in Ovid. Her poems were published in the same year, and though amorous enough could scarcely come under the description of lewd letters. The man who writes of villainy is not necessarily a villain, and the woman who pandered to the worst taste of her time in writing stage plays and lyrics, was not of necessity as bad as the worst characters she limned or so abandoned to the promiscuity of lovemaking as would be implied in making all her songs the expression of passion remembered in moments of tranquillity.

XV

As dramatist Aphra Behn is credited with seventeen plays, all but two of which were acted during her lifetime, and we do not propose to do more than glance at some of these. Many are based in earlier plays, and most of them owe all their dramatic value to the presentation of stories of amorous intrigue, either in London, or some foreign city. The locality, however, matters little, the characters are much the same whether London, Paris, Rome, Madrid or Naples forms the background.

The first appearance which Aphra Behn made as a dramatist was at the Duke's Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in December 1670, when *The Forced Marriage; or the Jealous Bridegroom* was produced, and ran for six nights,

which was far from spelling failure in those days. Although the scene of the tragi-comedy is laid "within the Court of France" it is pure romance, the spirit of it being that of the romances of the period that dealt with all manner of adventurings in the way of making the course of true love run the reverse of smoothly. The chief interest of the piece is that it was the play with which the first professional woman dramatist made her first appearance in the theatre. Though it was probably produced anonymously—the novelty of a woman playwright not promising popularity—the prologue, addressed to the gallants in the audience, explained the feminine authorship:

"Beauty alone goes now at too cheap rates;
And therefore they, like wise and politic states,
Court a new power that may the old supply,
To keep as well as gain the victory.
They'll join the force of wit to beauty now,
And so maintain the right they have in you.
If the vain sex this privilege should boast,
Past cure of a declining face we're lost.
You'll never know the bliss of change; this art
Retrieves (when beauty fades) the wandering heart;
And though the airy spirits move no more,
Wit still invites, as beauty did before.
To-day one of their party ventures out,
Not with design to conquer, but to scout.
Discourage but this first attempt, and then
They'll hardly dare to sally out again.
The poetess, too, they say, has spies abroad,
Which have dispersed themselves in every road,
I' th' upper box, pit, galleries; every face
You find disguised in a black velvet case;
My life on't; is her spy on purpose sent,
To hold you in a wanton compliment;
That so you may not censure what she's writ,
Which done, they face you down 'twas full of wit."

The play, which was written in a medley of poor blank verse and rhymed couplets, was sufficiently well received to induce the author "to sally out again," and a year later at the same theatre came *The Amorous Prince; or the Curious Husband.* This is a coarse comedy of intrigue, in which the author indulged for the first time in a dramatic trick to which she frequently resorted, that of disguising a heroine in man's attire, and gave evidence of her skill in stage craft as well as in her readiness to indulge in such indecency of language and suggestion as were the common stock of most of the playwrights of the period. The play appears to have met with considerable success even though the woman's authorship was again acknowledged in the epilogue.

XVI

There was a seeming gap of two years before Aphra Behn's next play was produced, the Duke's Theatre having in the interval been moved to a fine new house in Dorset Garden, Whitefriars.* This new piece, *The Dutch Lover,* had it would seem nothing to do with the author's husband having been Dutch, or with those reputedly Dutch lovers of whom she had written during her stay in Antwerp. The comedy was badly mounted and carelessly acted, while Angel the comedian, who took the part of the Dutch lover, gagged throughout the piece—"so that Jack-pudding ever used to do: which though I knew before, I gave him yet the part, because I knew him so acceptable to most o' th' lighter Periwigs about the town." The actor who in place of the words of his author spoke "a great deal of idle stuff," died shortly after, before indeed the play was printed as it was in the same year. In a long prefatory Epistle to the Reader Aphra showed herself possessed not only of a ready pen but also of a lively humour, which may be exemplified in the two opening sentences:

* A plaque on the east side of John Carpenter Street marks the site of this playhouse.

"Good, Sweet, Honey, Sugar-Candied Reader, which I think is more than anyone has called you yet, I must have a word or two with you before you do advance into the treatise; but 'tis not to beg your pardon for diverting you from your affairs, by such an idle pamphlet as this is, for I presume you have not much to do and therefore are to be obliged to me for keeping you from worse employment, and if you have a better you may get you gone about your business: but if you will misspend your time, pray lay the fault upon yourself; for I have dealt pretty fairly in the matter, told you in the title-page what you are to expect within. Indeed, had I hung a sign of the Immortality of the Soul, of the Mystery of Godliness, or of Ecclesiastical Policy, and then had treated you with Indiscerptibility and Essential Spissitude (words, which though I am no competent judge of, for want of languages, yet I fancy strongly ought to mean just nothing) with a company of apochryphal midnight tales culled out of the choicest insignificant authors; if I had only proved in folio that Apollonius was a naughty knave, or had presented you with two or three of the worst principles transcribed out of the peremptory and ill-natured (though prettily ingenious) Doctor of Malmsbury, undigested and ill-managed by a silly, saucy, ignorant, impertinent, ill-educated Chaplain, I were then indeed sufficiently in fault; but having inscribed comedy on the beginning of my book, you may guess pretty near what penny-worths you are like to have, and ware your money and your time accordingly."

"Plays," says the writer, "were certainly intended for the exercising of men's passions not their understandings" —and as playwright she acted admirably in accordance with that concept—"this being my opinion of plays, I studied only to make this as entertaining as I could, which whether I have been successful in, my gentle reader, you may for your shilling judge." It had, apparently, leaked out that *The Dutch Lover* was the work of a woman and there were some who were ready to let that weigh in their judgment

as "first nighters," for in this epistle to her reader Aphra also says: "Indeed that day 'twas acted first, there comes me into the pit, a long, lither, phlegmatic, white, ill-favoured, wretched fop, an officer in masquerade newly transported with a scarf and feather out of France, a sorry animal, that has nought else to shield it from the uttermost contempt of all mankind, but that respect which we afford to rats and toads, which though we do not well allow to live, yet when considered as a part of God's creation, we make honourable mention of them. A thing, reader—but no more of such a smelt: this thing, I tell ye, opening that which serves it for a mouth, out issued such a noise as this to those that sat about it, that they were to expect a woeful play, God damn him, for it was a woman's."

Sir Edmund Gosse has sought indirectly to excuse the licentiousness of Aphra Behn's work by suggesting that she had to try to write like a man; with the implication that her work for the theatre was meant to be taken as masculine stuff. The explanation is ingenious but unjustified. Even if no author's name was given on their production, the woman's authorship of each was made clear in prologue or epilogue; in the case of *The Dutch Lover,* the epilogue includes these lines:

> "What the other missed, let our scribe get,
> A pardon, for she swears she's the less cheat.
> She never gulled you gallants of the town
> Of sum above four shillings or half-a-crown.*
> Nor does she, as some late great authors do,
> Bubble the audience and the players too."

The view that Aphra Behn wrote in the manner of her free and easy contemporaries so that her work might be mistaken for that of a man is wholly untenable. It is more likely that her ready wit and engaging manners having made her free of the company of other writers, her first

* Theatre prices of the time.

"daring" essays in the use of unlicensed language, which coming from a young and witty beauty would have amused her companions, became easy to her so that when writing for the stage she found it natural to follow the vogue. For it was already the vogue; and the critic who suggests that Dryden as a dramatist was led into license by Aphra Behn was not only unjust but ridiculous. Pepys had confided to his Diary condemnation of Dryden's licentiousness, and Evelyn had instanced one of his plays as a symptom of how the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentiousness of the time, nearly three years before the appearance of Aphra's first play.

To heap blame on the woman and wink at the offending of her male contemporaries may have been inevitable to those of earlier generations to whom the equality of the sexes had not even been adumbrated; in these fairer-minded days we may surely realise that she was no worse than the period to which she belonged. Other women of the time who lived licentiously are remembered as the romantic foundresses of noble families; but because she wrote licentiously the historian of our dramatic literature can smugly say that the plain fact that she was a woman "goes far towards justifying the obloquy which has been the grave of her literary reputation."* There is nothing said of "obloquy" for the women who went to the playhouses of the time in the hypocrisy of masks; no "obloquy" for Mrs. Pepys who went on two successive days to see a play that her husband stigmatised as "very smutty," and doubtless duly wore her "vizard." The custom of wearing masks at the theatre was prohibited in 1711.

It may be recalled that Sir Richard Steele, writing less than quarter of a century after Charles the Second's reign ended, said of the very decade in which Aphra Behn began writing for the stage that it was a time at which "love and

* A. W. Ward: *A History of English Dramatic Literature*, iii, 453. Ward does not fail, it should be added, to do justice to the author's "uncommon ingenuity in the contrivance of stage situations," and thinks it was to this that her plays owed their popularity.

wenching were the business of life, and the gallant manner of pursuing women was the best recommendation at Court." It may even be that Aphra's innovation in showing that a woman dramatist could, no less boldly than her masculine rivals, give the theatre public what it wanted may have had something to do in helping on that improvement in stage taste which Steele noted in 1709.

XVII

It is not necessary to follow in detail the succession of Aphra Behn's plays, though mention is called for now and again from the fact that their publication gave the author occasion to speak out strongly on the injustice of finding fault with her work, not because it was bad, but because it was a woman's. To be the first professional woman writer called for courage, and this Aphra did not lack, indeed her demands for fair play in the matter have a strikingly modern note* in contrast with that of some of the apologetic " female pens " that followed her.

There was seemingly a pause of about three years before the production of Aphra's next play, *Abdelazer; or, the Moor's Revenge,* which was based on *Lust's Dominion* (long attributed to Christopher Marlowe), and it is recognised that " she has rather softened than intensified the passionate diction of her original." The founding of plays in earlier ones was of course a common feature of 17th and 18th century drama, yet Aphra Behn appears to have been specially singled out for blame for following the fashion. Her attitude towards her critics is indicated in one of the few of her letters that are traceable. This was addressed to a Mrs. Emily Price, who may have been the Mrs. Price

* That we are even now but approximating to recognition of the fact that the work's the thing, and the sex of the worker a point that should not even be considered, was lately shown in *The Times,* where in a memoir of J. H. Round, the historian, it was said that as a critic he was severe on the mistakes of writers, *whether men or women.* Had we attained the right attitude, the supplementary words would not even have occurred to the writer.

of the Duke's Company of actors, or possibly that Mrs. Price who, as we learn from Pepys, so strangely doubled the parts of being a Maid of Honour and one of the mistresses of His Royal Highness James, Duke of York. The letter, which may confidently be dated about the summer of 1677, runs:

"My dear, In your last, you informed me, that the world treated me as a plagiary, and, I must confess, not with injustice: but that Mr. Otway should say, my sex would not prevent my being pulled to pieces by the critics, is something odd, since whatever Mr. Otway now declares, he may very well remember when last I saw him, I received more than ordinary encomiums on my *Abdelazer*. But every one knows Mr. Otway's good nature, which will not permit him to shock any one of our sex to their faces. But let that pass: for being impeached of murdering my Moor, I am thankful, since, when I shall let the world know, whenever I take the pains next to appear in print, of the mighty theft I have been guilty of; but however for your own satisfaction, I have sent you the garden from whence I gathered, and I hope you will not think me vain, if I say, I have weeded and improved it. I hope to prevail on the printer to reprint *The Lust's Dominion,* etc., that my theft may be the more public. But I detain you. I believe I sha'n't have the happiness of seeing my dear Æmillia 'till the middle of September: but be assured I shall always remain as I am, Yours, A. Behn."

It is in the opening of the play which the author thus defended that we have the lyric of which Swinburne wrote in characteristic vein "'the virtuous Aphra towers above her sex' in the passionate grace and splendid elegance of that melodious and magnificent song to which Leigh Hunt alone among critics has ever done justice—and has done no more than justice in the fervour of his impassioned panegyric." That song, the one by which Aphra is likely longest to have a place in the authologies, is:

"Love in fantastic triumph sate,
While bleeding hearts around him flowed,
For whom fresh pains he did create,
And strange tyrannic power he showed;
From thy bright eyes he took his fires,
Which round about in sport he hurled;
But 'twas from mine he took desires
Enough t'undo the amorous world.
From me he took his sighs and fears
From thee his pride and cruelty;
From me his languishments and fears,
And every killing dart from thee:
Thus thou and I, the God have armed,
And set him up a deity;
And my poor heart alone is harmed
Whilst thine the victor is, and free."

Abdelazer is said variously to have been produced at the Duke's Theatre late in the autumn of 1676 and 1677. The play was printed in the latter year, and we think that its production may be ascribed to the earlier one, possibly somewhere about the same time as Aphra's *The Town Fop, or Sir Timothy Tawdrey* a lively but unlovely comedy of contemporary life with an unblushing presentation of bagnio scenes in all their ugliness. Two other plays, *The Debauchee* and *The Counterfeit Bridegroom*, sometimes attributed to her, need not detain us.*

The next of her plays, *The Rover; or the Banished Cavalier,* is regarded as one of the best that Aphra Behn wrote, though to modern taste its frank presentation of the theme of sexual intrigue makes it more curious than attractive. It presents the doings of a group of supporters of the

* The first is catalogued under Aphra Behn in the British Museum, and is described in the *D.N.B.* as "the worst and least original of her plays"; both are given in Miss Sackville-West's book as "commonly attributed to Mrs. Behn," but such attribution is not supported by Langbaine, Baker's *Biographica Dramatica,* or Mr. Montague Summers.

monarchy in exile—and might have been regarded as a severe satire on the character of those exiles by any play-goers who retained any of the puritan spirit of the Commonwealth. To the less serious-minded citizens of the time of Charles it was but a lively bustling piece of witty entertainment and met with very considerable success. It was the first of Aphra's plays to be produced without a hint as to the sex of its author, and being supposed to be the work of a man its authorship gave rise to great curiosity. Then came *Sir Patient Fancy,* based on Molière's *Malade Imaginaire* and other French plays, and with a basket scene strongly reminiscent of *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* This was a brisk farcical comedy with dialogue and one ridiculous scene of such startling indelicacy, to use the words of Sir Edmund Gosse, as to make the following address to the reader, which the author wrote on publishing the play something of an additional entertainment:

"I printed this play with all the impatient haste one ought to do, who would be vindicated from the most unjust and silly aspersion woman could invent to cast on woman; and which only my being a woman has procured me—*that it was bawdy,* the least and most excusable fault in the men writers, to whose plays they all crowd, as if they came to no other end than to hear what they condemn in this: *but from a woman it was unnatural:* but how so cruel an unkindness came into their imagination I can by no means guess; unless by those whose lovers by long absence, or those whom age or ugliness have rendered a little distant from those things they would fain imagine here.—But if such as these durst profane their chaste ears with hearing it over again, or taking it into their serious consideration in their cabinets; they would find nothing that the most innocent virgins can have cause to blush at: but confess with me that no play either ancient or modern has less of that bugbear bawdry in it. Others, to show their breeding (as Bayes says*) cried it was made out of at

* In *The Rehearsal.*

least four *French* plays, when I had but a very bare hint from one, the *Malade Imaginaire,* which was given me translated by a gentleman infinitely to advantage; but how much of the *French* is in this, I leave to those who do indeed understand it and have seen it at the Court. The play had no other misfortune but that of coming out for a woman's: had it been owned by a man, though the most dull unthinking rascally scribbler in town, it had been a most admirable play. Nor does its loss of fame with the ladies do it much hurt, though they ought to have had good nature and justice enough to have attributed all its faults to the author's unhappiness, who is forced to write for bread and not ashamed to own it, and consequently ought to write to please (if she can) an age which has given several proofs it was by this way of writing to be obliged, though it is a way too cheap for men of wit to pursue who write for glory, and a way which even I despise as much below me."

In that closing sentence we have Aphra Behn's *apologia* for the indelicacy of her stage writings. That she could have done better, the plays themselves bear evidence but as one who had set out to provide entertainment for the theatre-going public of her day, she had to produce such fare as they approved; she recognised the truth which Dr. Johnson was to put on Garrick's lips seventy years later—

"The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live."

It is true that the note to the reader of *Sir Patient Fancy,* may well leave us wondering as to how the author would have interpreted the word bawdry, and it must be said that the epilogue to the play, spoken by Nell Gwyn, who took one of the leading parts, and doubtless written by Aphra herself, was a distinct challenge to, not to say a trouncing of, her audience or such parts of it as were addressed as coxcombs and pit buffoons. The vein in which a number

of prologues and epilogues were written at the time suggests that audience-baiting was a not uncommon part of the game.

XVIII

The Young King, or the Mistake, which was produced at the Duke's Theatre early in 1679 is worthy of note because it is to be gathered from the dedication that accompanied it on its publication four years later, that it was the author's first essay in dramatic writing. The dedication is, however, written in a somewhat highfalutin style, the exact meaning of which is a little vague. It further piques our curiosity from being addressed "To Philaster" (*i.e.* lover of Astrea), and from the suggestion that it belonged to a date before she had as yet appeared on the stage, though it was the eighth in the order of production. This epistolary dedication to Philaster runs:

"'Tis the glory of the great and good to be the refuge of the distressed; their virtues create 'em troubles; and he that has the god-like talent to oblige, is never free from impunity, you, Philaster, have a thousand ways merited my esteem and veneration; and I beg you would now permit the effects of it, which could not forbear, though unpermitted, to dedicate this youthful sally of my pen, this first essay of my infant-poetry to yourself. 'Tis a virgin-muse, harmless and unadorned, unpractised in the arts to please; and if by chance you find anything agreeable, 'tis natural and unskilled innocence. Three thousand leagues of spacious ocean she has measured, visited many and distant shores, and found a welcome everywhere; but in all that vast tract of sea and land could never meet with one whose person and merits could oblige her to yield her unguarded self into his protection.* A thousand charms of wit, good

* Was "Mr. Behn," the merchant of Dutch extraction, forgotten? or had he never existed?

nature and beauty at first approach she found in Philaster; and since she knew she could not appear upon the too-critical English stage without making choice of some noble patronage, she waited long, looked round the judging world, and fixed on you. She feared the reproach of being an American, whose country rarely produces beauties of this kind. The Muses rarely inhabit there; or if they do, they visit and away; but for variety a dowdy lass may please. Her youth, too, should atone for all her faults besides; and her being a stranger will beget civility, and you that are by nature kind and generous, tender and soft to all that's new and gay, will not, I hope refuse her the sanctuary I am so sensible she will have need of in this loose age of censure. You have goodness enough to excuse all her weaknesses, and wit enough to defend 'em; and that's sufficient to render her estimable to all the world that knows the generous and excellent Philaster; whilst this occasion to celebrate you under this name, is both a pleasure and honour to Astera."

The variant spelling of Astrea seems purposely devised to point the name of Philaster, and it is to be regretted that the bepraised dedicatee who seems to have played some part in Aphra's life cannot be identified. That indefinite dedication has been interpreted as meaning that *The Young King* was written when Aphra was in Surinam, but really tells us no more than that its author had travelled much, and that it was her first attempt at playwriting. It is probable that the dedication was written long before publication.

Her next play (1679) which Aphra dedicated to Nell Gwyn, in a long letter of fulsome adulation, was *The Feigned Curtezans; or, A Night's Intrigue,* which as the title might suggest is by no means wanting in the almost inevitable indelicacy of the time, but apart from that is a lively and entertaining comedy and one in the writing of which the author owed least to any other dramatist. It

is one of the best, if not on the whole the very best of Aphra Behn's dramatic works, alike in its ingenious devising of comic situations and its witty dialogue, yet any passage of illustrative length becomes impossible, from the frequent indelicacies and indecencies which, having something of bravado when written, are now unquotable.*

In 1681 the dramatist sought to repeat the success of *The Rover* with *The Rover: Part II* in which her banished cavaliers carry on their amorous intrigues in Madrid. When printed the play was dedicated in terms of ridiculous exaggeration to "a prince of illustrious birth and God-like goodness," James, Duke of York, the author having apparently overlooked the fact that in the Prologue it had already been dedicated in no complimentary terms to the fools who paid money to go to the theatre to witness its performance!

> "Almighty Rabble, 'tis to you this day
> Our humble author dedicates the play,
> From those who in our lofty tire† sit
> Down to the dull stage-cullies of the pit,
> Who have much money, and but little wit:
> Whose useful purses, and whose empty skulls
> To private interest make ye public tools."

Aphra Behn's next play, *The City Heiress; or, Sir Timothy Treat-all* (1682), was also introduced by a prologue—provided by Thomas Otway—in which the audience was treated in a similarly cavalier fashion. The play, which "had the luck to be well received by the town," was largely inspired by contemporary politics, and so did not hold the stage as long as *The Rover* and other of Aphra's plays, but a play based somewhat upon it, served as inspiration for several scenes in the light opera

* This play was revived at the Lincolns Inn Fields Theatre in 1716, with the following record of takings July 27, £12 11s.; July 28, dismissed (i.e., no audience); Aug. 3, £23 13s.; Aug. 8, £19 10s.

† *i.e.* tier.

of *Dorothy* as recently as 1886. The year 1682 was a busy one on the stage for the dramatist, for it saw the production also of two other plays from her pen, one of them, according to "A Person of Quality" who wrote the epilogue, being a slight farce written in five days. This was *The False Count; or a New Way to Play An Old Game,* and the other was *The Roundheads; or, the Good Old Cause,* a political piece dealing with the events of little over twenty years before, immediately preceding the Restoration, a "small mirror of the late wretched times," which the author dedicated in a lengthy epistle to Henry FitzRoy, Duke of Grafton, "the most adorable person in the whole creation." Earlier in her epistle the writer had proudly boasted of "being above that mean and mercenary art," flattery!

XIX

From 1683 there was a gap of nearly four years before Aphra Behn's next stage appearance, and to the interval it would seem belongs much of that miscellaneous work in prose and poetry to which we will refer later. The next play, produced at Drury Lane in 1687, was *The Lucky Chance; or, An Alderman's Bargain,* a comedy of the usual kind of intrigue most ingeniously contrived, and of such impropriety as to make the author's prefatory defence of it somewhat ridiculous—except in so far as she protests once again that the critics who objected to the improprieties of her play accepted similar things in a score of other plays written by men. "All I ask," she says, "is the privilege for my masculine part, the poet in me (if any such you will allow me), to tread in those successful paths my predecessors have so long thrived in, to take those measures that both the ancient and modern times have set me, and by which they have pleased the world so well. If I must not, because of my sex, have this freedom, but that you will usurp all to yourselves; I lay down my quill, and you

shall hear no more of me, no not so much as to make comparisons, because I will be kinder to my brothers of the pen, than they have been to a defenceless woman; for I am not content to write for a third day* only. I value fame as much as if I had been born a *hero;* and if you rob me of that, I can retire from the ungrateful world, and scorn its fickle favours."

The quill was not put aside, and in the same year, at the Duke's Theatre once more, Aphra Behn was represented by "one of the best pantomimic farces ever seen," *The Emperor of the Moon.* This was in no small measure based on a French version of an Italian harlequin-play on the same theme published a few years earlier. Aphra in dedicating the printed play to the Marquess of Worcester somewhat ingenuously says "a very barren and thin hint of the plot I had from the Italian, and which, even as it was, was acted in France eighty times without intermission." A very remarkable run for any play in the 17th century.

Sir Edmund Gosse (in the *D.N.B.*) strangely dismisses the two plays last mentioned with "both of these pieces were failures"—we say strangely, because in no sense can either be rightly described as failures, for *The Lucky Chance,* though alien to decency, is a good play and held the stage for some ten years while *The Emperor of the Moon* is a thoroughly delightful piece of work, as Mr. Montague Summers shows, acted again and again for nearly a century after its author's death and is the only play of Aphra Behn's that could be presented on the modern stage without drastic alteration or humble apology.† Indeed this heartily entertaining romantic farce might be commended to the notice of some enterprising producer, with

* The author's reward was the third day's takings at the theatre.

† More than half a century after Aphra Behn's death, it may be noted *The Emperor of the Moon* was produced simultaneously as the Christmas entertainment at Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres. This was on Boxing Night, 1748. At Drury Lane it was acted along with Mrs. Centlivre's *A Bold Stroke for a Wife.*

modern stage craft it should prove a great popular attraction at the Christmas holiday season. The comedy of the two girls and their lovers, the pantomime of the maid with her two lovers (Scaramouch and Harlequin), and the fantasy of the old doctor whose lunar obsession leads to the confident expectation of visitors from the moon are ingeniously merged into a delightful whole,—and there is no scene to offend modern canons of taste and not a dozen words no longer current. It was as though the dramatist had determined for once to show that she really could break away from that writing to tickle the ears of the groundlings which she had said she despised as being so much below her. In these days when a message *to* Mars has been attempted and inter-planetary communications are discussed, some genius of the theatre like Sir Nigel Playfair might find capital material for stage presentation in *The Emperor of the Moon.*

XX

It is strange that though Aphra Behn's life as professional writer may be said to have lasted for just twenty years, half her plays, all her poems, all her translations, and all those romantic tales known as her " novels " appear to be crowded into the second decade of that period. It is probable that many of her poems were written in the earlier decade and certainly some were written before she had turned to play-writing, possibly even before the stay in Surinam if the story of her literary precocity be true. The earliest publication of her miscellanea noted is the paraphrase of Oenone's Epistle to Paris for the edition of Ovid's Epistles published under Dryden's editorship in 1680—that paraphrase of which Dryden wrote his happy compliment: " I was desired to say that the author, who is of the fair sex, understood not Latin; but if she do not, I am afraid she has given us who do, occasion to be ashamed."

In August, 1682, Aphra provided prologue and epilogue for an anonymous play, *Romulus and Hersilia,* at the Duke's Theatre, and political allusions in the epilogue caused the issue of an order to take Mrs. Behn, as author, and Lady Slingsby as speaker, of the epilogue into custody! Whether they were arrested and in any way penalised is not known, but a suggestion that the episode may have had something to do with a five years gap, 1682-87, in Aphra's play-producing is unfounded, for before the close of the year of the offending epilogue two of her plays were brought out at the same theatre.

As we have already said it is possible that Aphra may have done much work for the booksellers before her name came to have a value after she had established her position as dramatist. It is indeed not at all unlikely that she was the A.B. responsible for bringing together the *Covent Garden Drollery* of 1671—and seeing the character of much of her work we are inclined to accept the theory put forward by Mr. G. Thorn Drury as to her authorship.

When in 1684 Aphra Behn collected her various poems into a volume, enlarged by her translation from the French of *A Voyage to the Isle of Love,* she dedicated the book to the Earl of Salisbury saying that "hard fate" had obliged her to bring it forth into a censuring world. Never, surely, did poet so apologise for publishing! Maybe she was a little ashamed of some of the contents.

While the book was going through the press Aphra wrote to the publisher in a tone which shows very plainly that the "hard fate" was want of pence, for the letter runs:

"Dear Mr. Tonson, I am mightily obliged to you for ye service you have done me to Mr. Dryden; in whose esteem I would choose to be rather than anybody's in the world; and I am sure I never, in thought, word, or deed merited other from him, but if you had heard what was told me, you would have excused all I said on that account. Thank him most infinitely for ye honour he offers, and I

shall never think I can do anything that can merit so vast a glory; and I must owe it all to you if I have it. As for Mr. Creech, I would not have you afflict him with a thing which cannot now be helped, so never let him know my resentment. I am troubled for ye line that's left out of Dr. Garth, and wish your man would write it in ye margin, at his leisure, to all you sell.

" As for ye verses of mine, I should really have thought 'em worth thirty pounds; and I hope you will find it worth £25; not that I should dispute at any other time for 5 pound where I am so obliged; but you cannot think what a pretty thing ye Island will be, and what a deal of labor I shall have yet with it: and if that pleases, I will do the 2d Voyage, which will compose a little book as big as a novel by itself. But pray speak to your brother to advance the price to one 5lb more, 'twill at this time be more than given me, and I vow I would not ask it if I did not really believe it worth more. Alas I would not lose my time in such low gettings, but only since I am about it I am resolved to go through with it though I should give it. I pray go about it as soon as you please, for I shall finish as fast as you can go on. Methinks ye Voyage should come last, as being ye largest volume. You know Mr. Cowley's *David* is last, because a large poem, and Mrs. Philips her plays for ye same reason. I wish I had more time, I would add something to ye verses that I have a mind to, but, good dear Mr. Tonson, let it be 5lb more, for I may safely swear I have lost ye getting of 50lb by it, though that's nothing to you, or my satisfaction and humour: but I have been without getting so long that I am just on ye point of breaking, especial since a body has no credit at ye Playhouse for money as we used to have, fifty or 60 deep, or more, I want extreamly or I would not urge this. Yours, A.B.

" Pray send me ye loose papers to put to these I have, and let me know which you will go about first, ye songs and verses or that. Send me an answer to-day."

That letter starts several seemingly insoluble problems. We cannot say what vast glory John Dryden proposed for Aphra Behn, we do not know what cause for resentment she had against Thomas Creech; we cannot learn what the reference was to Dr. Garth—for the poet of that name did not get his degree until some four or five years after the letter was written, which must have been in 1683 or 1684, for it was in the latter year that her Poems were published. The reference to " a little book as big as a novel " rather suggests that Aphra had already done novels for Tonson, and her postscript might imply that she had some other work in hand for Tonson as well as the poems; though the " that " may have referred to the translated *Isle of Love.*

XXI

The hand that in 1676 could pen the song " Love in fantastic triumph sate " was it may safely be averred already well practised in the art of writing lyrically. It is indeed strange that one who could on occasion write lyrics so well had so poor a mastery of the rhythms of blank verse, for Aphra Behn's achievement in that form rarely reaches the second rate; and even in the couplets, regular and irregular, customarily used for prologues or epilogues to her own and other people's plays she cannot be said to have moved easily. Some of her best efforts are in short lyrical schemes, or in those longer irregular pieces which in accordance with the fashion of the time she wrote under the title of Pindarics; for she was one of the happiest of those followers of Cowley who were criticised a few years later by Congreve for applying Pindar's name to verses that lacked Pindar's regularity.

Much of Aphra Behn's poetry, like her plays, is hopelessly marred by the readiness with which she debased her talent in the service of the low taste of the time, so that she is mostly to be found represented in the so called " Drolleries " and other collections of verses owing their

primary appeal to impropriety. Yet there is evidence that the poet had it in her to do better. If she made the improprieties play a large part in her writings for the stage as the readiest means of ensuring the essential monetary success, she appears to have done much the same in her verses from an easy vanity that found pleasure in the applauding of those whose applause was worthless. The women of the time who paid homage to virtue by wearing masks when they thronged to plays of which suggestive situation and obscenities of language formed a considerable part, doubtless also delighted in the handing round of those improper verses which formed no unimportant proportion of the literary output of men of ability of the period. Aphra Behn claimed the right to do as did the men folk of her day and her fame has suffered in consequence. That she could write unexceptionably we have happy evidence in several pieces, such as *The Dream:*

The grove was gloomy all around,
  Murm'ring the streams did pass,
Where fond Astrea laid her down
  Upon a bed of grass.

I slept and saw a piteous sight,
  Cupid a-weeping lay,
Till both his little stars of light
  Had wept themselves away.

Methought I asked him why he cried,
  My pity led me on:
All sighing the sad Boy replied,
  Alas I am undone!

As I beneath yon myrtles lay,
  Down by Diana's springs,
Amyntas stole my bow away,
  And pinioned both my wings.

Alas! cried I, 'twas then thy darts
  Wherewith he wounded me:
Thou mighty deity of hearts,
  He stole his power from thee.

Revenge thee, if a god thou be,
  Upon the amorous swain;
I'll set thy wings at liberty,
  And thou shalt fly again.

And for this service on my part,
  All I implore of thee,
Is, that thou'lt wound Amyntas' heart
  And make him die for me.

His silken fetters I untied,
  And the gay wings displayed;
Which gently fanned, he mounts and cried,
  Farewell, fond easy maid.

At this I blushed and angry grew
  I should a god believe;
And waking found my dream too true
  Alas, I was a slave.

In another kind we may quote from her long commendation of Creech's translation of Lucretius, the passage having something of biographical interest as showing that, whatever Aphra's education may have been it did not include any instruction in the classic languages:

" What in strong manly verse I would express,
  Turns all to womanish tenderness within,
  Whilst that which admiration does inspire,
  In other souls, kindles in mine a fire.
  Let them admire thee on—Whilst I this newer way
    Pay thee yet more than they:
  For more I owe, since thou hast taught me more,
  Than all the mighty bards that went before.

Others long since have pall'd the vast delight;
In duller Greek and Latin satisfied the appetite:
But I unlearned in schools, disdain that mine
Should treated be at any feast but thine
Till now, I cursed my birth, my education,
And more the scanted customs of the nation:
Permitting not the female sex to tread,
The mighty paths of learned heroes dead.
The god-like Virgil, and great Homer's verse,
Like Divine mysteries are concealed from us.
We are forbid all grateful themes,
No ravishing thoughts approach our ear,
The fulsome jingle of the times,
Is all we are allowed to understand or hear."

XXII

Aphra Behn's " novels "—so unlike the works to which we attach that label nowadays—belong to the closing years of her life. Though it is surmised that one or two were written about 1683-4, such happen to be among those not published until after her death—most of them were written in the last two or three years, including *Oroonoko,* the longest of them all. That book which we have already discussed earlier is, from the point of view of the modern reader, easily the most important of her writings; against it no word can be said on the score of impropriety. The other novels, short stories rather, vary in length from about a dozen pages to fifty or sixty, and in theme from a more or less simple narrative, to a farcical imbroglio and high-falutin romance; from the study of an English love affair, to somewhat fantastic stories that are mere translations.

One of the stories *The Court of the King of Bantam* might well have been planned as a comedy, including as it does scenes of much the same character as occur in some of the author's plays. Its theme is the exploiting of the belief in his destiny of one Mr. Would-be King—quite unlike it

may be said to Mr. Kipling's treatment of "the man who would be King." Another story, *The Adventure of the Black Lady,* a slight episodic sketch is interesting in that it reads like a transcript from contemporary life. It ends drolly with an account of the way in which "the vermin of the parish (I mean the overseers of the poor who eat the bread from 'em)" were foiled in their search for a mother whom they thought likely to become chargeable to the parish—being shown into a room where a cat had just kittened! *The Unfortunate Happy Lady* is a more elaborate romance of the London of the time, with sufficient veracity to make us wish that the author had written more of this and made fewer excursions into the merely amorously sensational. The other stories deal mostly with amorous intrigues, nuns and nobles presented with all the unreality of extravagant romances.

In her prose Aphra Behn is easily most successful when she is most herself; where she is writing on at least a basis of experience, as in *Oroonoko,* or expressing herself without any idea of a "public," as in those eight *Love Letters to a Gentleman* which were printed some years after her death; letters which as a cry from the heart are as notable as anything we know, it is impossible to believe that they could have been written as copy. Their genuine note of love and pain is such that it is matter for regret that we cannot know when they were written nor to whom they were addressed.

A letter which Aphra wrote from town to her friend Mrs. Emily Price, evidently then in the country, has already been quoted and another letter, mostly in verse, to the same correspondent may be given, showing as it does their positions reversed, and indicating also that the writer was not without a liking for the country life. She evidently writes from the Oxford district:

"My dear, In your last, you admired how I could pass my time so long in the country: I am sorry your taste

is so depraved, as not to relish a country life. Now I think there's no satisfaction to be found amidst an urban throng (as Mr. Bayes calls it).

The peaceful place where gladly I resort,
Is freed from noisy factions of the Court:
There joyed with viewing o'er the rural scene,
Pleased with the meadows ever green,
The woods and groves with tuneful anger move,
And nought is heard but gentle sighs of love:
The nymphs and swains for rural sports prepare,
And each kind youth diverts his smiling fair.
But if by chance is found a flinty maid,
Whose cruel eyes has shepherd's hearts betrayed,
In other climes a refuge she must find,
Banished from hence society of kind.
Here gentle Isis with a bridegroom's haste,
Glides to o'ertake the Thames, as fair as chaste;
Then mixed embracing, they together flie;
They live together and together die.
Here every object adds to our delight,
Calm is our day, and peaceful is our night.
Then, kind Æmilia, flie that hated town,
Where's not a moment thou canst call thy own:
Haste for to meet a happiness divine,
And share the pleasures I count only mine.

A. Behn.

P.S.—A SONG.

'Tis not your saying that you love,
  Can ease me of my smart;
Your actions must your words approve,
  Or else you break my heart
In vain you bid my passion cease,
  And ease my troubled breast;
Your love alone must give me peace,
  Restore my wonted rest.

But, if I fail your heart to move,
And 'tis not yours to give;
I cannot, wonnot cease to love,
But I will cease to live."

XXIII

It is indeed little that we know of the circle in which Aphra Behn moved, of where she lived, of whom were her friends, and all those other details that would help us to realise her in the round as it were, as one of the more remarkable personages of a fascinating but scarcely edifying period in our social history. We are told that she held her own among the wits of the time, Dryden, Southerne, Otway, and others; we can gather from her dedications that she was familiar with people in high social positions—even after allowing for such dedications as may have been designed to draw guineas in return for their flattery—and much the same may be gathered from some of the poems addressed to individuals though many of the initials and romantic aliases remain effective disguises.

The anonymous author of the earliest biographical sketch of Aphra Behn claims to have known her well and there are no grounds for disputing that claim. To that writer we owe the only available contemporary personal appreciation, and its simple frankness of friendly laudation far outweighs in our opinion the two or three slanders published during her time, and the amplification of such slanders years after her death by writers such as Tom Brown who were out to gratify the lowest taste of the readers of their time without any regard whatever for truth. Says that "one of the Fair Sex" in concluding her sketch of Aphra Behn's life:

"She was of a generous and open temper, something passionate, very serviceable to her friends in all that was in her power; and could sooner forgive an injury, than do one. She had wit, honour, good humour and judgment.

She was mistress of all the pleasing arts of conversation, but used 'em not to any but those who love plain-dealing. She was a woman of sense, and by consequence a lover of pleasure, as indeed all both men and women are; but only some would be thought to be above the conditions of humanity, and place their chief pleasure in a proud vain hypocrisy. For my part, I knew her intimately, and never saw ought unbecoming the just modesty of our sex, though more gay and free than the folly of the precise will allow. She was, I'm satisfied, a greater honour to our sex than all the canting tribe of dissemblers, that die with the false reputation of saints."

It is difficult to believe that those words—with their double insistence on honour—could have been written but a few years after Aphra Behn's death if she was half as bad a woman as her fame has long declared; that she was described as "a lover of pleasure" has been interpreted as meaning that she was that pathetic creature "a woman of pleasure." She wrote with a license that shocked some of her contemporaries, some of her poems even refer to various lovers—but poems are not always histories. Herrick could address love poems to many ladies, and was at times not wanting in freedom of expression, yet he could also write of himself that "jocund his muse was, but his life was chaste."

XXIV

From 1687 to her death in the spring of 1689 it would seem as though Aphra Behn must have been writing with feverish activity. Two plays, as we have seen earlier, belong to the period, as also do seven or eight of her "novels" (including *Oroonoko,* by far the longest of them), certain translations and congratulatory and other poems. There remained further two unacted plays and some prose stories. It is of course impossible to say that all these were written during the closing years, and it is strange seeing

that she appears to have suffered from ill-health, and also from lack of means, that more of this work did not find its way to the booksellers.

Reference has been made earlier to Aphra Behn's rendering of Æsop's fables in English. In the year of the Great Fire there had been printed a fine folio edition of the *Fables* in French, Latin, and English, with a brilliant steel engraving to each fable by Francis Barlow. The English versions which were engraved at the foot of the illustrations were made by Thomas Philipott in this fashion:

> " A Fox ensnared in a rude gin does bail
> His life from ruin by his loss of tail
> When to avoid this signal obloquy
> In a convention of Foxes he
> Declared what prejudice to them accrued
> By being with such bushy tails indued,
> And therefore moved that his example might
> Them that destructive load to prune invite;
> But one replied his project was not fair
> That would a stain with public loss repair
>
> ---
>
> Winnow all counsel, for you'll find most tend
> To private ends when they your good pretend."

The greater part of this fine edition of Æsop was destroyed in the Fire, but fortunately the steel plates from which it was printed were preserved, and a new issue of it was prepared twenty years later. For this new edition all Philipott's clumsy verses were scraped from the plates and fresh renderings of the Fables by Aphra Behn engraved in their place—this, however, was so done that here and there palimpsests of the old are vaguely visible through the new. In an address to the reader of the 1687 edition it was said " the ingenious Mrs. A. Behn has been so obliging as to perform the English Poetry, which in short comprehends the sense of the fable and moral: whereof to say

much were needless, since it may sufficiently recommend itself to all persons of understanding." In " performing the English poetry " Aphra was at least more concise and less awkward than her predecessor, as may be seen by taking her version of the same fable:

" The Fox (who lost her tail) persuades the rest
To bob their trains as most commode, and best,
When one replied—We, more discreet, disdain
To buy conveniences with public shame.

MORAL

He that grave counsel for your good pretends
Fifty to one promotes his private ends."

It is not necessary to describe in detail the varied work which Aphra Behn appears to have crowded into the last two or three years of her life. By far the most important portions of it, *The Emperor of the Moon* and *Oroonoko* have already been dealt with. She had evidently attained to a position which must have made her work either in verse or prose, original or translated, welcomed by the booksellers though apparently she did not receive any considerable sums for her writings.

That when Edmund Waller died in October, 1687, Aphra Behn had had a long spell of illness we learn from a pathetic letter she wrote to Waller's daughter—" I am very ill and have been dying this twelve month "—and also from the opening lines of the poem that she wrote to that poet's memory:

" How, to thy sacred memory, shall I bring
(Worthy thy fame) a grateful offering?
I, who by toils of sickness am become
Almost as near as thou art to a tomb? "

She was to continue hard at work, while tortured by " indigence and lost repose, those meagre furies," for

another eighteen months before the end came. That end, which we are told was "occasioned by an unskilful physician," came on April 16, 1689, when Aphra Behn was presumably nearing the completion of her forty-ninth year.

Only a month or so before her death Aphra Behn had addressed to Bishop Burnet one of those irregular poems which it was the fashion of the time to call "pindaric." Burnet had inquired after her and it would seem that he, who had played so considerable a part in bringing about the Revolution which replaced James II by William and Mary, suggested that Aphra should write in favour of the change. Miss Sackville-West says that Aphra declined the suggestion, Mr. Summers says "to her credit she refused." She seems rather to have been torn between loyal sentiment towards the scuttling James, and admiration of the new "inviting prospect," and though the opening lines of the final stanza have been interpreted as indicating that her prospects had been affected by the change of monarchs, they may be no more than the generalising terms of one aware that her life was nearing its close:

"Though I the wondrous change deplore,
That makes me useless and forlorn,
Yet I the great Design adore,
Though ruined in the universal turn.
Nor can my indigence and lost repose,
Those meagre Furies that surround me close,
Convert my sense and reason more
To this unprecedented enterprise,
Than that a man so great, so learn'd, so wise,
The brave achievement owns and nobly justifies.
'Tis you, great Sir, alone, by Heaven preserved,
Whose conduct has so well the nation served.
'Tis you that to posterity shall give
This age's wonders, and its history.

And great NASSAU shall in your annals live
To all futurity.
Your pen shall more immortalise his name,
Than even his own renowned and celebrated fame."

The whole of this poem addressed to Burnet shows the writer as one of the best masters of the " pindaric " of the period—excelled alone by Cowley and Dryden among her contemporaries. Most of her later work, in prose and verse alike, suggests that Aphra Behn had got beyond the phase of pandering to popular taste with indecency.

XXV

When Aphra Behn began her career as England's first professional woman writer she was a young widow of thirty—beautiful, witty, social and unconventional. She moved not only in the literary circle, but that she had many friends in the " Society " of the time may be gathered from many of her poems and some of the less formal dedications of her plays and other writings. In the poems they are generally addressed by mere initials or referred to under poetical aliases, an exception is Lady Morland (second of the four wives of Sir Samuel, a mechanical genius of the period), whom Aphra evidently knew as Carola, daughter of Sir Roger Harsnett, and at whose marriage in Westminster Abbey she attended in October, 1670.

That, like Tennyson's poet, Aphra was dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn and, above all, with the love of love might be amply demonstrated from her writings. It is possible, if not probable, that the man on whom she lavished her affection was already married—frank verses addressed to Lysander tell us as much—and this may account for her not re-marrying. It is generally accepted that her lover, or one of her lovers, was John Hoyle, a member of Gray's Inn and the Inner Temple, and

as her verses are addressed to him as Amyntas, it may well be that he is hidden under other pen-names and is the Lycidas to whom—after she had become a dramatist—the series of eight passionate and genuinely moving *Love Letters to a Gentleman* were addressed. Hoyle's character as hinted at in one of the poems, suggests that it may have been so, though the letters have no internal evidence that their recipient was already married. A contemporary rumour that Hoyle assisted Aphra in her writing may have arisen from their association; that he was among her intimates; that he was a black-eyed fascinater of many ladies we have on the testimony of Aphra herself:

> " His eyes are black and do transcend
> All fancy e'er can comprehend;"

we know also that he was indicted in connection with a gross scandal, and that he was killed in a street brawl two or three years after Aphra Behn's death.

Aphra Behn may have been a kept mistress; she may have had several lovers—Edward Ravenscroft, the dramatist, was said to have been one, after they were both dead—but it is well to remember that the evidence is almost wholly inferential, being based on one or two contemporary lampoons and posthumous amplifications of them, supported by the very " free " verse in which she indulged. In April, 1689, she died, as we have recorded, and was duly buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, an honour being thus done to her memory which, even in that cynical time, could scarcely have been paid had she been the " mere harlot " of an undiscriminating tradition. Two lines inscribed over her grave announced:

> " Here lies a proof that wit can never be
> Defence enough against mortality."

They are said to have been written by John Hoyle—perhaps to demonstrate how little truth there could be in the statement that he had shared in the writing of her works.

XXVI

It is something of the irony of fate that has overtaken one known to her contemporaries as a dramatist and poet o'ertopping all women who had essayed poetry and drama before her, one for whom was hyperbolically foretold a fame that should continue even

> " When the globe of vast Eternity
> Turns up the wrong side of the world,
> And all things are to their first chaos hurled! "

Among those readers who stray from the broad highway of England's literary achievement the name of " the matchless Orinda " is probably better known than that of " the incomparable Astrea;" yet by every scale of literary measurement the work of Aphra Behn transcends that of Katherine Phillips. Had she not been compelled to work for a livelihood and pander to a generation cynically indifferent to good taste she would have taken her place on that broad highway of achievement, and her works would not have been relegated to that class of books which our booksellers euphemistically denominate " curious." So much pitch has been flung at her that most people refuse to regard anything else. A goodly volume of prose and poetry might however be brought together from Aphra Behn's works and be labelled " the unexceptionable Astrea "—and it would include some of the best of her writings.

CHAPTER II

MARY DE LA RIVIERE MANLEY

An essay in furtive autobiography—Pseudonymous self-laudation—When and where born?—Childhood in Jersey and Suffolk—A childish infatuation—Disregarded love-letters — A cousin-guardian — Romance-loving aunt — Guardian turns wooer—Ill-starred marriage—Child-wife's misery—Bigamist-husband's confession—With Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland—Intrigue with Barbara's son—Stage coach journey and its implications—First essays in drama—An impressionable manager—Thanks for being "damned"—Dela meets "the man of her life"—Manley forgets his appointed duty and Tilly is acquitted—The amour of Tilly and "Rivella"—She nobly resigns him to a wealthy widow—"The old wounds bleed afresh"—Beginning of quarrel with Steele—An incident in Bristol—Episode with a Prince—A marriage register "forgery"—First "Secret History": attack on the Duchess of Marlborough—Another dramatic attempt—"The New Atalantis" and its scandals—The original of Steele's Sappho—Attack on Steele: her "provoked but humble servant"—Arrested, but impenitent—The "Tatler" attacks her—A malicious dedication — Dela succeeds Swift on the "Examiner"—A mystery "Beau"—Dela and Dean Swift—Becomes mistress of a city printer—Alderman of "many defects and but few virtues"—Most successful play—Making the amende to Steele—The Alderman printer's harem—He seeks pastoral life in Italy—Mrs. Manley dies during his absence.

I

LIKE three out of the four book-companions with whom she is here grouped, Mary de la Rivière Manley was a lady of many reticences. Among many other things she wrote a little volume which is re-

garded as her life history, but in it she tells what she pleases —and leaves out very much more than she tells. This slim book, entitled *The Adventures of Rivella; or the History of the Author of the Atalantis,* by Charles Lovemore, was published in 1714; but Charles Lovemore did not write it, indeed there was no one of that name. The person who played the part in her life ascribed to him was Lt.-Gen. John Tidcomb, who was Mary Manley's constant friend. She herself was her own historian, and by writing under an assumed name was free to say as many nice things of herself as she wished. There are also scattered among her works many bits of autobiography, some of which betray a warm self-complacency, and are valuable additions to the available knowledge of her life. She is rarely referred to as Mary Manley or Mrs. Manley, but was generally known to her friends as Dela—even as Aphra Behn was known as Astrea—and herself used that diminutive from her own name as signature to the dedications of some of her books.

She had no illusions about her personal appearance, as may be seen from the introductory paragraph to *Rivella,* in which book she figures also as Madame Dacier. "Charles Lovemore" begins the narration with: "I will entertain you with certain memoirs relating to Madame Dacier; of the admiration and applause she has gained, and conquests she has made; by which you will find that the Royal Academy are not the only persons that have done her justice; for whereas they bestowed but the prize of eloquence, others have bestowed their hearts. I must agree with you that her perfections are not of the sort that inspire immediate delight and warm the blood with pleasure; as those do who treat well of love." The personal description which follows is to the effect that she is neither tall nor short, that her hair is fine, abundant and of pale ash colour. "I have heard her friends lament the disaster of her having had smallpox in such an injurious manner, being a beautiful child before; but the disease had nearly left her free." "Few who have beheld her in

Mary de la Riviere Manley
Frontispiece to "The Adventures of Rivella"

Facing page 84

public could be brought to like her; whereas none that became acquainted with her could refrain from loving her. I have heard several wives and mistresses accuse her of fascination: they would neither trust their husbands, lovers, sons, nor brothers, with her acquaintance upon terms of the greatest advantage."

" Her eyes, nothing can be more tender, ingenious and brilliant, with a mixture so languishing and sweet, when love is the subject of the discourse, that without being severe, we may well conclude the softer passions have their predominancy in her soul."

If Rivella (otherwise Charles Lovemore, Madame Dacier, and Mrs. Manley) was not particularly proud of her face, she had a frank admiration for her body. She says that until she grew fat she did not believe there was a single defect in her body, her lips were admirably coloured, her teeth small and even, her breath always sweet, her complexion fair and fresh. Yet with all these points there was a something about the collected whole which demanded familiarity before she could be recognised as pleasant looking. " Lovemore " continues that " her hands and arms have been publicly celebrated; it is certain that I have not seen any so well turned, her neck and breasts have an established reputation for beauty and colour; her feet small and pretty."

Then follows a panegyric upon her wit and her manners. Rivella speaks things pleasantly, her knowledge is universal, her company entertaining to the last; her temper haughty, impatient of contradiction, her soul soft and tender to the afflicted, extravagant, grateful, loyal, etc. Quite a clever piece of self advertisement, only the reader is meant to believe it written by another hand than her own.

II

Mary de la Rivière Manley came of an ancient family, which, according to Burke, originated in one " Manlay who fell at Battle Abbey." Her father, Sir Roger Manley,

was a cavalier who had been obliged in 1646 to leave his country for Holland, where he passed fourteen years. He returned on the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. On October 25th, 1667, Sir Thomas Morgan the Governor of Jersey appointed him Lt.-Governor in Chief of all His Majesty's castles, forts and forces in Jersey, and Sir Roger took the oath of office on November 2nd of that year. This post he held until 1674, when he became Governor of Landguard Fort in Suffolk. He was a man of learning as well as a soldier, having published a *History of Late Wars in Denmark* (from 1657 to 1660); *De Rebellione* in Latin, and a *History of the Rebellion* in English which was published after his death.

Dela asserts that he was the author of the well-known book *The Turkish Spy,* that he had written the first two and best volumes only, when he died and his lawyer, seeing its possibilities secured the manuscript and with the aid of Robert Midgley completed and published the eight volumes. There seems to be no proof that Midgley wrote them, and their authorship remains an unsolved mystery, while critical opinion is against the daughterly claim that the first volumes were written by Sir Roger Manley.

There is a little difficulty about the place and date of Dela's birth. It is generally stated that Jersey was her birthplace. She herself says that it was " in Hampshire, in one of those islands which once belonged to France," obviously the Channel Islands. One account says she was born at sea between Jersey and Guernsey. As to the date she puts her birth in 1677, but probably for reasons politic the real date was advanced, for the family left Jersey in 1674. One account gives her birth year as 1663, which would not only make her fourteen years older than she claimed to be, but ante-dates her father's Jersey appointment by four years. She was probably born in 1672. In any case, the chief events of her childhood recorded in *Rivella* must have happened at Landguard Fort after the family left Jersey.

Dela says she was, "with imperfect beauty," born between two perfectly handsome sisters. Maria, the eldest, who married "very unhappily" at eighteen in 1689, and Cordelia, also born in Jersey, where the mother died. There were two sons both older than the girls. Thus it follows that as Sir Roger brought his family from the Channel Islands to England in 1674, the five children must have been born by that date, and Dela must have been at least sixteen or seventeen when her sister married. She says in *Rivella* that Cordelia was "much younger" than herself: so she must be allowed the one-time license accorded to all women about age.

The children were seen after in England by "a very severe gouvernante," but neither this stern lady nor the austerity of her father could curb the naturally amorous instincts of the youthful Dela. "As a child" she fell in love with a young subaltern, who had come with a company to increase the garrison on the suspicion of an invasion from Holland. His name was Carlisle, but in the story he is called Lysander. Happily he "did not know how to receive a good fortune which was become so obvious that even her father and all the company perceived her distemper better than herself; her eyes were continually fixed upon the young warrior and she could neither eat nor sleep, and became hectic with symptoms of a dangerous illness." The usual course of letting blood was pursued which made her very weak.

The boy, who was in love with someone else, was charged to avoid Dela, but she saw him often and "feasted her eyes upon him." "She knew not what she did, as not having free will, or the benefit of reflection; nor could she consider anything but Lysander." Her father was gentle, caressing her more than usual and telling the governess never to leave her alone with Lysander, but to divert her mind as much as possible. He also used his influence to get that battalion replaced by another.

One day when a game of hazard was suggested Lysander

could not play as he had lost all his money the day before. Dela would have liked to give him everything she possessed. At the moment her father sent her to fetch some money for him from a certain drawer of which he gave her the key. When she saw what a quantity of money was there she plunged her hand into a "hundred pound bag of guineas" and drew out as much as she could hold.

Going back to the card players she met Lysander in the gallery and bade him hold out his hat and not say a word. Upon which she threw the guineas into the hat and passed briskly on to take to her father what he wanted. Writing of this years later she said: "The awe she was in of her father was so great that upon the highest emergency she durst not have wronged him of a shilling." She never knew whether Sir Roger had not detected the theft, or thought it better to ignore it.

Charles Lovemore (John Tidcomb) is made to tell at this point how he loved Dela and wrote letters to her daily, and eventually found his trouble wasted; she forgot to read them and answered none. One day she showed him a pocketful which she had not even opened. He felt annoyed at this, but it was worse when with great indifference she let him take them away unread. This does not sound as though she was at the time such a child as she represents. No youth would write love letters to a very little girl.

The day after the incident of the guineas these young people "were drinking chocolate at the Governor's toilet" when the drums began to beat, and they were told that they would see a fine sight, the new forces march in and the old march out! (The old had only been there eighteen days.) At this news Dela turned pale as death; she ran to her father and sobbed on his bosom with such violence that he feared hysterics; and she had to be carried to her room, where she fell from one fainting fit to another. For some time she was dangerously ill and "Charles Lovemore's" soul sickened at the thought of what might

happen. On her recovery she begged to be sent away, and as her brother was at that time in France, she was sent to be with him, with the object of learning to speak French. In three months, her cure—and perhaps her French accent—duly accomplished, she returned to find that John Tidcomb was being sent on his travels for some years by his father. John begged her to marry him secretly before he left, but, fearing to displease her father she refused, and he left for Italy unconsoled. She was only twelve at this time, according to her own dating.

It had been planned that Dela should become one of Queen Mary's maids, but the throne of James II was already tottering, and then came the flight from England. Sir Roger, loyal to his Stuart king, resigned the command of Landguard Fort and retired to private life in a small country house. He grieved deeply over the overthrow of the Stuarts and died, probably in 1790, as he was dead when his *History of the Rebellion* was published in 1791.

Sir Roger had two brothers, Sir Francis, who was a Royalist, and John, the youngest, who followed Cromwell. John had two sons named John and Isaac, and it was the young John who was to play a large part in Dela's life. He was almost adopted by Sir Roger, who gave him " the education of a gentleman, and loved him with a distinguishing tenderness." He was considerably older than his girl cousins. At Sir Roger's death John Manley, then married, was left the guardianship of the two young sisters and their affairs, they being each bequeathed £200 and a share in other property which was to be sold. Dela says of her Cousin John: " He had always had an obliging fondness towards us, which was wonderfully taking with girls; we loved him as much as possible."

III

John Manley sent the two girls into the country to an aunt who read books of chivalry and romance " with her

spectacles," and infected Dela with the same habit (but not the spectacles) until every stranger she met became a potential prince or lover. The aunt however died, and John went to fetch the girls on the break up of that home. He was in deep mourning and told them that his wife was dead, whereupon his young cousins congratulated him on " his deliverance from an old uneasy lady, that we remembered enough to hate ever since we were children."

The only clue Dela gives as to date at this time is that she was not then fourteen, though history says that she was certainly near nineteen. She tells us that after the death of the aunt and the settlement of her affairs, John took herself and her sister up to London to live. There are some discrepancies in her story, but the account from the second volume of the *Atalantis* shall be given first.

John lost no time in declaring his love for Dela and did it " with such an eagerness that none can guess at, who are not acquainted with the violence of his temper." Dela's vanity was touched at his wooing, it harmonised with the romantic stories she had been reading, but she was not in love with John. She " had the honour and cruelty of the true heroine," who would not permit her adorer " so much as a kiss of my hand, without ten thousand times more entreaty than anything of that nature could be worth."

Then she fell ill of a fever, and her life was despaired of. John and Cordelia nursed her and for sixteen nights slept alternately on a little pallet in the sick room. Upon her recovery Dela promised to marry John; and the wedding took place in the presence of her sister, a maid servant and a man who was a relation by marriage. It is at this point that she declares that " I was then wanting of fourteen, without any deceit, or guess of it in others." Which statement is, in itself, a little suspicious. It is of course based on her assertion that she was born in 1677. If we did accept this statement, her sister " much younger than herself " could have been but a child, too young to have been of value as a nurse in a critical illness.

In the *Atalantis* she calls herself Delia while John becomes Don Marcus.

No sooner had John gained his desire than he suddenly and unaccountably turned into an ogre. "He brought me to Angela (Atalantian for London)* and fixed me in a remote corner of it, forbade me to stir out of doors, or to receive the visits of my dearest sister, or any other relation, friend or acquaintance. I thought this a very rough proceeding, and grieved the more excessively at it, since I had married him only because I thought he loved me; those that know his person will easily believe I was not in love with him. He was about twenty-three years older than I was, and as I have often heard him say himself, he was a man, and with my father in the next chamber when I was born." (If this be true it disposes of the story that she was born in a vessel between Guernsey and Jersey.) "Then as to his person, his face and shape had never been handsome. What he values himself upon most, is a sort of out-of-the-way blustering wit, by no means polite. You know him vain, talkative, opinionated, mixing a thousand absurdities with every grain of sense; then so perfect a libertine, that he never denied himself the gratification of any of his passions; every way a debauchee. Yet can this man talk of honour, loyalty, and losing all for his duty!

"I was uneasy at being kept a prisoner, but my husband's fondness and jealousy was the pretence. . . . Soon after I proved with child, and so perpetually ill that I implored Don Marcus to let me have the company of my sister and my friends. When he could have no relief from my importunity (being assured that in seeing my relations I should learn the more than barbarous deceit he had used to betray me) he thought that it was best for him to discover it. Having first tried all the arguments he could invent, then the authority of a husband, but in vain, for I was fixed to my point and would have my sister's company; he fell upon

* It must be noted that he had already brought both girls to live in London.

his knees before me, with so much confusion, distress and anguish, that I was at a loss to know what could work him up to such a pitch. At length, with a thousand interrupting tears and sobs, he stabbed me with the wounding relation of his wife's being still alive! conjured me to have some mercy upon a lost man, as he was in an obstinate, inveterate passion, that had no alternative but death or possession: could he have supported the pain of living without me, he would never have made himself so great a villain. But when the absolute question was whether he should shoot himself or betray me, self love had turned the balance, though not without that anguish of soul as had poisoned all his desires. Having a thousand times started in his guilty sleep, my father's form perpetually haunting his troubled dreams, reproaching him as a traitor to that trust which in the pangs of death he had reposed in him. . . . Alas, my surprise and grief were beyond the ease of words, beyond the benefit of tears. Horror! amazement! sense of honour lost! the world's opinion! ten thousand distresses crowded my wounded imagination! I cast my looks upon the conscious traitor with horrible dismay. The stubborn tears refused to flow to my relief; I could not sigh; I could not groan; my blood was stagnated, so was my reason. He carried me to the bed all motionless. Oh! that some pitying God had that moment torn me from his impious embraces! that I had had but strength or courage to have abandoned the villain! to have left him to perpetual remorse! Oh! that I had but then proclaimed him through all the streets of Angela! for the betrayer of my glory! the destroyer of an ancient worthy family. . . . Alas! what relief was there for me? my brother that might have revenged my wrongs was newly killed at sea.

"My fortune was in Don Marcus's hands, or worse, already lavished away in those excesses of drinking and play, that he could not abstain from, though he had lately married me, a wife of whom he pretended to be fond. I was young, unacquainted with the world, had never seen

the necessities of it, knew no arts, had not been exposed to any hardships. . . . What could I do? forlorn! distressed! beggared! to whom could I run for refuge, even from want and misery, but to the very traitor that had undone me? I was acquainted with none that would espouse my cause; a helpless, useless load of grief and melancholy! with child! disgraced! my own relations either impotent of power or will to relieve me!"

There is more of this, but enough has been quoted to show the case she made out for herself and also to show the style in which the *Atalantis* books were written. It is not likely that a child of fourteen felt or realised all that has been described here. In 1709 when it was written, that is to say seventeen years later, she was an experienced woman, and described this early calamity with a very different understanding and knowledge than she would have possessed at fourteen—as she would have us believe that she was then.

The end of the matter was that she remained with her cousin, though as she says, "no entreaty, no persuasion, could ever again reconcile me to his impious arms."

She also mentions her child, of whom no further information is available. "My wretched son, whenever I cast my eyes upon him, was a mortal wound to my repose; the errors of his birth glared full upon my imagination. I saw the future upbraiding him with his father's treachery and his mother's misfortunes." (Poor little son!)

"Thus forsaking and forsaken of all the world in my morn of life, whilst all things should have been gay and promising, I wore away three wretched years without either one companion or acquaintance." When she looked abroad she found the world inexorable. John Manley (or Don Marcus) got a comfortable new employment, and went away promising to look after her and her child; he wanted her to go into the country with him, and as she refused, promised to save from his income the money of hers that he had lost.

There the history of her young life ends after another page of ecstatic repinings.

IV

From other books and stories that Mrs. Manley wrote other scraps from her life story are to be gathered; and among them several discrepancies appear. Her father died in 1690, after which she lived with an aunt long enough to mould her mind to the enjoyment and practice of romance. Then came the death of the aunt and the winding up of her affairs; then the removal to London with her sister. Next we have her illness, the wooing by John, their marriage, and again her removal to London, but without her sister. After which she spent three wretched years in almost solitary confinement with John her one companion.

In 1693, which is but three years after her father's death, a great lady (as the term goes) came to the house next that "solitary mansion" in which Dela was pining away; and after John Manley had departed for the West. This lady was Barbara Villiers, the Duchess of Cleveland, one-time mistress of Charles II. She learned Dela's story from her hostess, a Mrs. Ryder, and sought her out. It is stated that she was the first person with whom Dela had conversed for three years. The Duchess, fond of new faces about her, used a thousand arguments to dissuade her from wearing away her bloom in grief and solitude, and invited her to her own house. She seems to have needed some young, sympathetic person to take the position of favourite and helper in social affairs, one who served her yet lived with her as a social equal. And for a time Dela well filled the position. Dela says her neighbour, Mrs. Ryder, actuated by jealousy, was the first to blacken her character to the world, and even sent letters by the penny-post to make Hilaria (Dela's pen name for the Duchess) jealous of her guest's youth.

John Tidcomb (Charles Lovemore) returned to England to find the Manley household dispersed, heard of Dela's misfortune and determined to find her that he might offer her himself and the whole of his fortune. He sought her obstinately but vainly for a year. Then one night he went to call upon Madame Mazarin, and had the joy of seeing Dela enter with the Duchess of Cleveland. When Dela writes of Lovemore it must be assumed that John Tidcomb is the real person who greets her, but when she describes his thoughts and emotions, one has to realise that they are her own ideas or her translations of what she believes to be in his mind. However, she writes so convincingly that it is quite easy to assume that what she offers is an actual narration of facts.

On seeing her this night Tidcomb felt a revolt against the company she was in; he also thought she was much "impaired," "Her sprightly air, in which lay her greatest charm, was turned into a languishing melancholy; the white of her skin degenerated into a yellowish hue, occasioned by her misfortunes and three years solitude." Dela however could not allow this harsh criticism of her appearance to stand, for she adds: "though quickly after she recovered her air and complexion."

She was overjoyed to see this friend of her childhood, and asked him to sup with her that night at the Duchess's house. He went and heard her story, "over which he wept, neither eating nor drinking."

This interlude in the house of a notorious and sought-after woman did much to fashion Dela's subsequent life; she got to know in a fleeting way all sorts of people; many of whom are renowned in history. There was Churchill, with "his ingratitude, immorality and avarice"! She was present when he refused to lend the Duchess twenty guineas while playing at cards, though she had given him thousands; "he who betrayed his master [when he deserted James II] and raised himself on his sister's dishonour."

She learned many family secrets and was the tiresome

child among the company taking notes which were later to be blazoned to the world in defamatory histories.

In six months the Duchess had grown tired of her, as she always soon wearied of these domestic partners. She found a new favourite and picked a quarrel with Dela, accusing her of intriguing with her son, the Duke of Grafton. Dela says it was proved that the young man was at the theatre at the critical time named in the accusation. However, the casual Duchess answered any inquiries about her discarded companion with: "Oh! she has run away with my son!"

John Tidcomb begged Dela to go with him to his country seat, and she refused, saying that "she must be in love with a man before she could reside with him."

V

The next episode in her life of which there is definite knowledge was a stage-coach journey to the west of England, on which she started in June 1694. In *The History of Rivella* she says that she was determined to go where she was unknown; and she spent two years in this amusement, never making herself acquainted with anybody. That is a statement very difficult of belief. One has only to read the letters in which are given an account of *A Stage-Coach Journey to Exeter* to realise that she could not live without talking to someone. And it is probable that she had a definite design in going.

The eight letters, which were unquestionably written by Dela, describe in airy fashion incidents on the journey and anecdotes about her fellow passengers. On June 24th she is at Egham, sixteen miles from London, intent on giving up the world, but alas! already the allurement of green grass has faded, the trees with their blooming, spreading beauties are the worst sort of canopy, the company is dull and the food impossible. She had to dine at 10 o'clock in the morning upon a leg of mutton, it being the custom to prepare one day beef and the next day mutton for the dining stages.

In the second letter, written from Hartley Row, she is a little more cheerful, for the landlord there is a perfect beau and most exquisitely performs the honours of his house, with especial attention to herself. Here the Mayoress of Totness becomes one of the company,—"it was the custom to kiss the lady's hand." Here too is introduced a foppish baronet's son, who insists upon telling her the story of his life, at least the latest story: which is of his pursuit of a fair damsel even as far as her bedchamber, where he finds another lover already installed.

Nothing of importance happens. At Bridport, which she spells Bridgeport, a beau traveller pulled off his travelling suit and put on a dress suit with brocade waistcoat and cuffs. Each day seems to afford some little hearsay love story of the type of easy morals, thus making this book a sort of introduction to those that followed. She is at Exeter on June 26th and at some unnamed place on July 16th. After this comes the somewhat enigmatic note: "There happened a long intercourse between these letters, but business unfit for the public keeps 'em at present concealed."

This is followed by the eighth letter, dated March 15, 1695. In this she writes: "Let me tell you all those romantic ideas of retirements, which viewed at a distance, give a ravishing prospect, now I am wedded, bedded too, prove the worst sort of matrimony; but it is only to such a particular friend as yourself that I dare complain; to the remoter sort I assume a stoical appetite and air:—Tell them the world with all its gaudy pleasures are but rich delusions, which at once corrupt our senses and our fame: That the little spot of earth I have chose to fix my fate in, has more solid entertainments, more real innate delights than the glories of a Court. Then sigh and seem to pity the more elevated part of the world, that can bury themselves in noise and crowd. But let me tell you, there is no real satisfaction without conversation. I have had so much of the dead since I settled here, and, as I may say, nothing of the living, for I find none deserves the name, that I wish

for the conjuring art and would rather converse with the ghosts of the departed than always with their books or myself."

This book had an introductory dedication written " by one who has a boundless admiration for her," which was signed, " Your present admirer and most devoted, humble and obedient servant, J.H." Among the annotations on the back fly-leaf of the copy of the original issue of this work in the British Museum is the statement: " She wrote these letters to her namesake and cousin, John Manley Esq; they fully express what kind of esteem she had for him."

This would appear to be nothing more than a shot in the dark, suggesting as it does that she was writing affectionately and intimately to John Manley three years after the event which she regarded as the tragedy of her life, and at a time when she is supposed to have felt unbounded hatred for him, that is to say if it is also true that he betrayed her before 1694. John Manley lived at Truro in Cornwall, and was later Member of Parliament for Bossiney. Exeter was not the end of her journey, and the question is whether she was going on to Truro at Manley's invitation? The hint, given in the spring of 1695, that now she was married and extremely bored with country and private life, certainly seems to conflict with the story told to the world fourteen years later.

There is also the hint that " business unfit for the public ear " has been done! It is at least possible that 1694 was really the date of her marriage with John and that by 1696 she was thoroughly tired of the life she shared in the quiet country with him. It may be said that the story of the child marriage *must* be the true one, told in such detail, but it must not be forgotten that she was particularly a writer of romance, and also that she ardently desired respectability, and perhaps antedated the unfortunate episode of her marriage to inspire pity.

Who was J.H. who published this book without her

knowledge and while she was in the country? Here are two extracts from the dedication which seem somewhat to explain the matter:

"Should I follow the business of all dedicators, which is encomium, mine must be as boundless as the theme: I should tell the world how separate you are from all the weakness of your sex; what a nobleness and generosity of temper is yours; how different from the shadow of interest; or mean design; how have I heard you compassionately regretting the miseries of others, and never your own, but when they prevented your exalted charity to them!"

This is entirely in the manner of *The History of Rivella,* and might have been written by the same author, that is to say by Dela herself. Yet she asserted that the book was issued without her knowledge and withdrew it from publication. Even then there might have been "method in her madness," and another paragraph from the dedication may explain that method.

"Fond of the vanity of having your ladyship's friendship, I cannot rest easy with the vast blessing, unless the world knows me favoured by a person so extraordinary: and whilst the town is big to see what a genius so proportionate can produce, whilst Sir Thomas Skipworth and Mr. Betterton are eagerly contending who shall first bring you upon the stage and which shall be most applauded, your tragic or comic strain, I could not refuse the vanity (my soul whispered to me) of stealing you from the expecting rivals, and dexterously throw you first into the world as one that honoured me with your friendship before you thought of theirs."

While Dela was trying to amuse herself in the country she wrote two plays, one a comedy, which she says she wrote in seven days while idling in the garden, *The Lost*

Lover: or The Jealous Husband, which Sir Thomas Skipworth put on at the Theatre Royal in 1696; and the other, *The Royal Mischief,* a tragedy, was brought out by Betterton at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre a little later in the same year.

It may be suggested that as it was nearly two years since Dela had been mixing in London life, she felt that a little self-advertising was necessary, and to this end she collected the letters written on her outward journey, added the dedication containing the announcement of the plays, and had the book published. When it was well under way, and shortly before the plays were produced, she withdrew the work from circulation, as having been published without her consent. Done with sufficient publicity this would have been a very good advertisement. Alexander Pope was to follow a not very dissimilar method of putting his letters before the public.

The manuscript of *A Stage-Coach Journey to Exeter* was solemnly given by Dela Manley to a friend (unnamed) in 1717, with instructions that it should not be republished until after her death. It was re-issued in 1725, without the dedication.

In another of her works, *Court Intrigues,* there seems to be a touch of autobiography. A traveller, wandering abroad in the early morning, comes to a small, commonplace-looking house and rests on a seat within its gate. "I saw from the other end of the field, a lady advancing towards the house. She had on a white silver-stuff nightgown, hanging loose or lapped about her, lined with full rose-coloured satin; a waistcoat that at the bosom showed a quantity of fine Flanders lace, with a shift and cuffs of the same; her night linen clean and fine as possible, tied with cherry and silver ribbons, and over that a fine Dutch straw hat, lined with green, mounted with a carnation feather and cocked behind."

The supposed observer recognises her as she approaches, and cries, "Is it possible that the charming Mrs. S——,

who has been dead to all the world for almost three years, forgetful of her youth, her family, her charms and fortune can bury herself in a place so unworthy of her! "

The lady recognises him and tells how dull and bored she is living in that solitude, and how she must get back to London. She takes him into her house, which is a dream of beauty within, and gives him the daintiest of food; and talks of Mr. King, her husband, who leaves her much alone. It is not at all unlikely that the " lovely lady " here described is meant for Dela herself touched with the radiance she knew so well how to throw about her characters.

VI

Dela Manley returned to town in the early summer of 1696, keen and anxious about the production of her plays. She spent a good bit of energy in wooing and flattering Sir Thomas Skipworth, of Drury Lane Theatre, then a man of fifty, " with a good head but short bowed legs,"—and a passion for admiration. He was a married man with many children, and possessed also a mistress of whom he talked much to Dela, while he walked with her in the park and sat behind her at the play. She wrote some verses to him which ran:

" Ah, dangerous swain, tell, tell me no more
Of the blest nymph you worship and adore;
When thy filled eyes are sparkling at her name
I, raving, wish that mine had fanned the flame.

If by your fire for her you can impart
Diffusive heat to warm another's heart;
Ah, dangerous swain! what would the ruin be,
Should you but once persuade you burn for me! "

Skipworth was overjoyed with these verses, had them set to music and sang them everywhere he went, until he

became known as "the dangerous swain." The intrigue which it is assumed was carried on with Sir Thomas did not it would appear long survive the failure of her play at his theatre.

During the short period before the plays were put on Rivella lived through feverish excitement. "Lovemore" says that at that period her vanity was at its height, also her gaiety and good humour; she understood good living and indulged in it. "I could not keep away from her house, yet was stark mad to see her delighted with every fop who flattered her vanity. . . . She looked upon all I said with an evil eye, believing there was still jealousy at the bottom. . . . I still preached, she still went on her way, without any regard for my doctrine, till experience gave her enough of her indiscretions."

The Lost Lover was produced and irretrievably damned on the first night. Later it was published in book form with a foreword by herself, in which she tries to be philosophical, but cannot help revealing her bitter disappointment.

"My design in writing was only to pass some tedious country hours, not imagining I should be so severely repaid. . . . I am now convinced writing for the stage is no way proper for a woman, to whom all advantages but mere nature are refused; if we happen to have a genius for poetry it presently shoots to a fond desire for imitation. Though to be lamely ridiculous mine was indulged by my flatterers, who said nothing could come from me unentertaining; like a hero, not content with applause from lesser conquests, I find myself not only disappointed of my hopes of greater, but even to have lost all the glory of the former. . . .

"Give me leave to thank the well-natured town for damning me so suddenly; they would not suffer me to linger in suspense, nor allow me any degree of mortification, neither my sex, dress, music and dancing could allow

it a three days reprieve, nor the modesty of the play itself, prevailed with the ladies to espouse it. . . . I am satisfied the bare name of being a woman's play damned it beyond its own want of merit."

It was not a good play. At the beginning a girl is asked how she found things in the country where she has stayed and replies: "'Twas rough cast, and hung heavily on every spoke; neither park, play nor basset table to call rugged time along; sometimes indeed, when disburdened London wanted new air and complexion for her female inhabitants, I had the diversion of seeing how well they could relish country sparks, after being cloyed with town beaux." No play could survive such an artificial style, which fortunately was not kept up all through.

The Royal Mischief produced by Betterton at the Lincoln Inn Fields Theatre had a better fate and seems to have enjoyed a short run. Langbain in his *English Dramatic Authors* says "There is a force and fire in her tragedy that is the soul that gives it life. . . . I could here give the reader a proof how well the rules of Aristotle are observed in this tragedy, by a lady who never read him." "Lovemore" remarks, "I have often heard Rivella laugh and wonder that a man of Mr. Betterton's grave sense and judgment should think well enough of a woman of eighteen to bring it upon the stage in so handsome a manner as he did, when herself could hardly bear the reading of it."

Rivella—or Dela—must have looked very young for her age if she could flatter herself that she would pass for eighteen when really twenty-four.

VII

It was quite early in 1697 that Dela found the "man of her life." After all the excitements caused by the plays, she again went out of London to "live in a pretty retirement, reading and walking." To her one day came

Catherine Trotter, the young poet and playwright, asking a favour of a nature which suggests that it was not generally known that Mary Manley and John Manley were no longer living together as man and wife. Catherine's first tragedy, *Agnes de Castro,* had been performed at the Theatre Royal in 1695 when she was only sixteen, and perhaps a certain feeling of jealousy animated Dela, for more than once she attacked her rival in her writings; " this thing without a name " is how she describes her in the third volume of the *Atalantis.*

" Mrs." Trotter, as the custom ran then, asked Dela's help for a man named John Tilly, who had been arrested on the 31st December, 1696 for malpractices in his office as Warden or Deputy Warden of the Fleet Prison. The trouble was that John Manley, now M.P. for Bossiney and Surveyor General of the Woods south of Grantham, had been appointed Chairman of the Committee ordered to examine into this business. As he and John Tilly had already been opposed, as subsidiary persons, in a great law suit Catherine judged that Tilly would have little chance; that Manley " would join revenge and retaliation to his own native temper of choler and fury," and so deal severely with the accused man. She therefore came to beg Dela to intervene and save the innocent man, for which she would certainly receive some advantage. When Dela said she would like to see John Tilly, the youthful poet blushed, whereupon Dela asked if he were her lover. Miss Trotter drew herself up and with a scornful smile asked what she meant, adding that Tilly was a married man, and her friendship was for his wife.

" All right," said Dela, " but I am going to see him before I promise to help him;" for she felt that this was a sly hint at her own reputation which she could not pass over.

The next day Tilly sent someone to wait upon her, and promised a certain sum of money if she succeeded; then, on a day appointed sent a messenger in a chariot to carry

her to the house of the Sergeant-at-Arms, where he was lodged. She took with her a book *The Moral Reflections of the Duke of Rochefoucault* to read if kept waiting, and laid it on the table while talking to Tilly. He took it up idly and, unthinking, carried it away at the end of the interview. From that book he formed an idea of the genius of the lady who chose it for her entertainment. " Behold the beginning of a friendship which endured for several years, even to Tilly's death."

" He had been married young, but as yet knew not what it was to love. Work, his wife and family filled his mind without dreaming there was anything in his wife's person defective to his happiness, that was in the power of any other of that sex to bestow."

On the morning of the day on which Tilly's case came on for hearing, Dela went to Westminster and stood where John Manley was sure to see her. When he arrived he was overcome with astonishment, and the blood rushed to his face as he spoke to her. According to Dela he blushed more and more and wondered if she were going to expose him, until he thought he had better take her away from such a public place. So he put her in a coach, got in himself and told the coachman to drive out of town.

If it was five or six years since the sham marriage and three since they separated as Dela's story runs, would he have been so overcome? It seems to us to give some weight to the idea that that two years in the West country might have been their period of married life, and that it was but a year since they separated. It must have been a strong over-mastering emotion which would have made a hard-headed man like John Manley forget his appointed duty.

However he blushed and lost his head and drove away. Another chairman was appointed; Tilly was acquitted with the usual reprimand and set at liberty; very much to the subsequent regret of Manley, when he considered how scandalously he had abandoned his own duty in the matter.

Before their country drive was over, Rivella had told her cousin-husband the whole affair and he suggested that she should cultivate Tilly's friendship; should refuse the money offered, and give up her home in the country and come to town. His reason for this was that he was one of those keenly engaged in the famous lawsuit over the will of the Duke of Albemarle, the litigants being the Earl of Montague and the Earl of Bath. The case was finally compromised in 1698 after the great sum—for that period—of £20,000 had been spent. In the *New Atalantis* there is a long and involved account of the parts Tilly and Dela played in producing a certain elusive and half-witted person, Monk, son of Colonel Monk, to whom the money was supposed to have been left, and it all ended for those two in a loss of money which the Deputy Warden could ill afford; "but he loved Rivella too well to reproach her with it."

This is the lady's description of the one man who stirred her heart. He was "a gentleman of undoubted merit, accomplished both from without and within; his face was beautiful, so was his shape till he grew a little burly. He was bred to business, as being what you call in France, one of the long robe. His natural parts, prodigious, which were happily joined by a liberal education; his taste delicate in respect of good authors; remarkable for the sweetness of his temper and in short, every way qualified for being beloved, wherever he should happen to love."

Dela tells how Tilly—whom she calls Cleander—often visited her, with a pleasure new and surprising to his hitherto insensible breast; and once more she retired into private life, happy in the love of a man whom she adored. She had no longer any scruples about marriage, having presumably become quite hardened concerning her own status. We hear nothing as to the opinion of Tilly's wife on the connection, though she is described as a termagant and older than her husband.

After some years the wife died, and her death brought

matters to a painful climax. Another " tedious and unhappy lawsuit " had put Tilly into great difficulties, and Rivella was keen sighted enough to scent danger for herself. No one else apprehended it, and when Tilly voiced the opinion of everyone that he loved her so well he would marry her she burst into tears, saying: " I am undone from this moment: I have lost the only person who secured for me the possession of your heart! "

The ubiquitous " Lovemore " conveniently entered at this moment and she ran away to hide her tears. Tilly was terribly wounded by her words, but said to Lovemore that she was the greatest mistress of nature that ever was born; she knew the hidden springs and defects of human kind. Self-love was such a universal evil that he was afraid Dela was right, but whatever happened he should never know again a woman of her worth, neither could anything but extreme necessity force him to abandon her innocence and tenderness. If " Lovemore " had not been there all this praise would have been wasted in solitude.

Soon after this Cleander knew his fate; he would have to pay a sum too great for him to grapple with, and could only expect to languish in prison for the rest of his life. Dela could not hesitate to save him. There was a rich young widow ready to marry him! he must marry her. So " pulling up her spirits and fixing her resolution " she told him that he should not be undone for her sake; she had received many obligations from him, and he had suffered inconvenience on her account, particularly on account of the great lawsuit. She was proud it was now in her power to repay part of the debt she owed.

So John Tilly married the rich widow, who took care to secure her fortune to her own use first. She paid off the great debt, but that left many lesser ones to trouble him. Dela saw him once " by permission " three weeks after his wedding. She gave herself up to racketting, cards, visits, plays until she fell ill. For ten months her illness lasted, and she was taken into the country. By the

time she returned to London two years had passed away and when she again met Tilly "the old wounds bled afresh," for he was not happy, the marriage had not been a success, he was still harassed by debt, their tempers differed, and his wife kept her money to herself. It was a dangerous meeting, for Dela found him still beautiful. Poor man, he paid for his sins, for, four years after his marriage—"four years of uneasiness"—his mind gave way and in three years more he died.

VIII

At some undated period when Dela found it hard to keep herself in London, she went to stay with some friends in Bristol. It was probably for this journey that she unavailingly asked pecuniary help from Sir Richard Steele, and so initiated the great quarrel of her life. She does not give the real names of those with whom she went to live; but the family consisted of father, mother, two sons, no longer young men, and a daughter about thirty.

There can be no doubt that Dela was a flirtatious person. She would have put it differently, and talked of "eyes so languishing and sweet when love was the subject of discourse." The second son in this household seemed to be quite unawakened to any idea of love, and could not see why any man should kiss a woman, or think that a woman was attractive. Perhaps Dela took this as a challenge, for she set herself to gain his attention, and to teach him that life held something more than work and sleep. He very slowly woke up, until one day entering her room—everyone entertaining their friends in their bedrooms in those days—he started kissing her with real fire. Then they heard the rest of the family coming home and upstairs; they remained still; but the sister, suspicious, took up a post where she could watch Dela's door, which was open, and see who came out, for she was sure her brother was there. To save the situation the young man got out of the window

on to the tiles, and in at another window and so down the back stairs out of the house—and the sister having watched for three hours, hated Dela ever after. She also surreptitiously read a letter her brother had written to Dela, and then told him that the latter had shown it to her. He believed this and could not forgive the unkindness, and Dela, very hurt, cried, " I am not born to happiness. When young betrayed! fortune is cruelly against me; I *can't* hope not to be happy! "

This incident was embodied in a little book, which was published in 1711, entitled *Court Intrigues: in a Collection of Original Letters from the Island of The New Atalantis.*

After Tilly's death we are told that Dela buried all thought of love or gallantry in his tomb: but this incident and subsequent events do not bear out that assertion.

There was one other earlier friendship of which she was proud, and that was with George, Prince of Hesse Darmstadt. She met him on his first visit—when she was in the country with a friend. On his second visit he asked to meet her again, and she and two other " ingenious English ladies " spent an evening at basset with him. Dela sat next the Prince, helped him in his play and " prevented him from being cheated," managing so well that his Highness was the only winner. Like the usual prince in the story he presented her with his picture. Dela says that he wrote to her until the day before his death at Barcelona in 1705. She adds to this that Tilly was not jealous as he knew the Prince's heart was otherwise engaged.

Among Mrs. Manley's friends was one known as Mrs. Mary Thompson, who claimed to be the wife of a Mr. Pheasant, of Upwood, Huntingdonshire. Mrs. Thompson, under the name of Mrs. Mary Pheasant, widow, endeavoured to establish her right of dower out of the dead man's estate, which was about £1,500 a year. On the evidence which is recorded in Doctor's Commons, it appears that Mrs. Thompson and

Mrs. Manley were jointly concerned in the prosecution, and that Mrs. Manley was to receive £100 a year for life, if the judgment was in their favour. Record of marriage was discovered in the register of a church in Aldersgate Street; but it was judged to be a forgery, committed by Edmund Smith, one time prisoner in the Fleet, and "a very infamous fellow." Smith swore that he had procured the parson who performed the ceremony and that he and a Mr. Abson were present at the wedding. The parson, a Dr. Cleaver, was not above suspicion: for he appears to have been "a low and scandalous priest," and was believed to have been the man who performed marriages in the Fleet prison. However he and Mr. Abson were both dead when the case came on, and though it was supported by "some weak collateral evidence," the reputed wickedness of Smith's character, combined with the fact that an entry sworn to be by Mr. Pheasant, was not in that gentleman's writing, condemned the suit. So Dela Manley, not only did not gain a £100 a year, but lost both money and reputation.

IX

In 1705 Dela launched her first book on scandalous happenings, in which she mixed politics and personal incidents into romance. Work of this description, though it had become very popular in France, had not before been seen in England. Dela was interested not so much in policies as in parties, her sympathies being strongly on the Tory side. Thus public men or women who leaned to Whiggism were objects of criticism to her, and the most prominent woman in England, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough formed the subject of this, Dela's first novel, or "little history." The full title of it ran, *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians; being a looking glass for ——. Faithfully translated from the Italian copy now lodged in the Vatican at Rome and never before printed in any language.* 1705.

In the preface she describes the liberty enjoyed in the country of Albion (England). "The youth of that country encouraged by their parents' example, aspire to be privy counsellors before they get rid of the rod of their schoolmasters; and prentice boys assume the air of statesmen ere yet they have learned the mystery of trade. Mechanics of the meanest rank plead for a liberty to abuse their betters, and turn out Ministers of State with the same freedom that they smoke tobacco. Carmen and cobblers over coffee draw up articles of peace and war and make partition treaties at their will and pleasure."

Dela must have been feeling somewhat splenetic over "the lower orders" when she wrote that, for it has nothing whatever to do with the subject of the book itself, which is a description of how it was that Sarah Jennings came to marry John Churchill. The account is probably maliciously wrong—it is certainly different from all other accounts of the same event, even in her own works—and it was given to the public at a time when the Marlboroughs had reached the height of their power.

Mrs. Jennings, dubbed Jenifer, is shown as a scheming woman without any sense of morals, with a lovely daughter Zarah, whose heart is caught by a beautiful young man named Hippolito, otherwise Churchill. He is in love with Hilaria, otherwise the King's Mistress, the Duchess of Cleveland. When Jenifer found all this out she determined to take a hand in the matter, and managed to get her daughter a post in the household of the Duchess—much the same post as Dela held some years later. Churchill went to see his lady one evening, and wandered into her bedroom, "a very spacious room and made on purpose for a cooling room in the heats of summer, and had in it several beds of turf very prettily made, with pots of jessamine flowers and other sweets about." There were beds in this room and in one Zarah was reposing. Churchill, with the freedom of the age, went to talk to her, and then Jenifer burst into the room, demanding her

daughter, and pretending to faint at the sight of the young man. Recovered of her swoon she swore, wept, and then flew at her daughter, causing Churchill to defend her. Then she and he argued the matter, and eventually after a good quarrel, she brought in a priest who performed a marriage there and then.

As soon as this was done Churchill rushed from the room cursing himself for having fallen into such a trap. Zarah flew after him and cajoled him with her love and prettiness. He could not help but embrace her and upon this the Duchess entered. When she saw them she was full of fury which was loudly expressed and she beat the walls of the room with her hands. Jenifer and the priest came to see what had happened, and the noise attracted all the servants to help in the racket. The place was full of people, and all the world, including the King, got to hear of the affair.

As a matter of fact when Sarah Jennings was engaged to Churchill she was in the household of Mary of Modena, the second wife of James II, being in attendance on Princess Anne, and she remained Anne's lady so long as she was at Court. But Mrs. Manley's business was to discredit the Whigs, and Sarah was always a Whig. Of course she may have made her trial flight in the establishment of the Duchess of Cleveland, but she was not then married to Churchill, surreptitiously or otherwise.

Dela tells how the Duchess once gave Churchill £5,000, of which he invested £4,500 in an annuity upon Lord Halifax's estate. Sir Leslie Stephen in the article on Churchill in the *D.N.B.* says that Mrs. Manley recorded this in "the infamous *New Atalantis;*" but proceeds to show that the statement was true in that the original agreement of the investment is among the Blenheim papers. It is rather amusing that Archdeacon Coxe who wrote the Memoir of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, should have suggested that the Duchess of Cleveland gave him £5,000 "because she was his second cousin once removed."

The Secret History of Queen Zarah was republished half a dozen years later with the addition of a second part, bringing the castigation of that " Queen " up to date.

At the end of the following year, on December 16, 1706, the great actor of the time, Betterton, produced at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, a play by Mrs. Manley named *Almyna; or, the Arabian Vow,* based on the introductory part of *The Arabian Nights.* The actors included Betterton himself and Mrs. Bracegirdle. It was intended for tragedy and written in blank verse; but when the end was reached the author seems to have found it impossible to let the noble-hearted Sultana of a night be bowstrung as in the original; so with a most awkward and unconvincing accident with swords, the secondary characters, two young lovers between whom tension has arisen, are slain. It reads as an anti-climax, and she probably felt this herself, for when the second edition of the play was printed a happy-ever-after ending was substituted. The play had little success. Her verse runs smoothly and shows neatness and vivacity of expression, thus when Almyna's father rages against the cruelty of the Sultan she rebukes him with:

" Dry up your tears and smooth that furrowed brow,
Passions, my lord, but seldom mend a wrong,
Where anger ends, repentance still begins."

x

The first part of Mrs. Manley's most important book appeared in May, 1709. The full title is *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of both Sexes. From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean.* There were four volumes in all, the second being published in the Autumn. The first edition of the third and fourth volumes came out in the following year under the title of *Memoirs of Europe towards the close of the Eighth Century. Written by Eginardus, Secretary and Favourite to*

Charlemagne; and done into English by the translator of the New Atalantis. All four books were, in subsequent editions, comprised in *The New Atalantis.*

These books, small in size, but running to nearly 300 pages apiece formed a collection of " novels," mainly about living people in Society, each of whom was given a fanciful name, and they described, with embellishments no doubt, any scandals connected with them. It was a thoroughgoing exhibition of other folks' dirty linen, only possibly the linen was neither quite so torn or quite so dirty as it was represented to be. It purported to be done through a virtuous desire of reforming public morals. Society had become so corrupt that it was not only necessary but kind to let it see itself face to face. Thus Dela Rivière Manley had set herself the grim task of showing the world, and especially the Whig portion of it, just what sort of dirt it was wallowing in. We don't do this sort of thing nowadays or rather we do it differently; we might have to pay too dearly if it could be proved that we were attacking living people in our fiction; but there are novels published to-day which play with unspoken matters, and by hints and innuendoes create a dirty atmosphere, which is in reality worse than the frank freedom of the 18th century.

And manners too were coarse in those days. A. W. Ward says of Dela in *English Dramatic Literature,* " Mrs. Manley, the great Society novelist of an age to which she should not be too severely condemned for having held up a mirror. Of her cleverness there can be no doubt, and if she had little consideration for the good fame of others, she had at least the courage of her intentions, and held her own not only by the fear she inspired." But Augustus de Morgan described her in *Notes and Queries* in 1856 as " this demi-rep—to give her a name exactly as much above her deserts as it is below those of an honest woman." He adds " this book is far worse than its name would imply, even at that date;" but continues, " to my mind

they (the statements made in the work) do prove that their fundamental points were the talk of what was then called the town."

The first volume has as frontispiece a steel engraving showing the sea, a ship, a castle on a cliff and a town in the distance; in the foreground a woman in classic garb reclines beneath a rock, while an angel messenger, with a trumpet, flies down to her pointing upwards to another woman sitting on a cloud holding scales in one hand and a sword in the other. Beneath this picture are engraved the lines:

"O! Sacred Truth, inspire and rule my page,—
So may reforming satire mend a vicious age,
Whilst thy enlightening rays adorn and guard the place,
Astrea's glorious form surveys the race,
And Virtue wears the bright Ormond as face."

The figure on the cloud is Astrea, or Justice, who had abandoned this world, but was revisiting it to see if humanity had improved during her absence and in the pensive person, sitting in the foreground she recognises her mother, Virtue, her dress almost in tatters: "Oh! how despicable her garments! how neglected her flowing hair! how languid her formerly animating eyes! how pale, how withered the roses of her lovely cheeks and lips! how useless her snowy arms and polished fingers! they hung in a melancholy decline, and seemed out of other employment, but sometimes to support the head of the dejected fair one."

The two goddesses embrace and Virtue has a dreary tale to tell, how among the inhabitants of the island: "Hymen no more officiates at their marriages, the saffron robe hangs neglected in the wardrobe, the genial torch is long since extinguished, the glare only of a false light appears; *Interest* is deputed in his room. He pre-

sides over the feasts, he joins their hands, and conducts them to the sacred ceremony of the bed, with so much indifference, that were not consummation a necessary article, the unloving pair could, with the utmost indifference, repair to their several chambers."

The above is the text of the book, each " novel " being the story of a marriage or a supposed marriage, or love-making, often of a questionable kind. In some editions there is a key to the characters, the real name being written —or printed—at the bottom of the page, such as Lord Tor—ton (for Torrington). This gentleman was an admiral, who—virtue reported—had taken a charming lady to sea with him in the dress of a boy. The fleet was engaged with the enemy and " the young creature's fears . . . disordered her into fits," so that " the admiral, careless of glory," forbade the ships to advance and so lost the battle.

Virtue and Justice go inland, and outside a great city meet Intelligencia, who is busily running about. She is first lady of the bed-chamber to Princess Fame. So, assuming visibility the two goddesses ask her to join them. She replies that the King of the Island [William III] is just dead and she is busy spreading a report of the matter, adding, " I have already been at the new Empress's [Queen Anne's] Court, and left her to condole with her she-favourite [the Duchess of Marlborough] over sparkling champagne."

Intelligencia is, however, compelled to walk invisible with them: " In the name of Jupiter we arrest you to attend on Justice and Virtue. You are to inform us of all we shall demand, and Truth is summoned to attend you on this occasion." So these three characters wander through the country, towns and palaces, observing the inhabitants, all events being explained by Intelligencia (otherwise Mrs. Manley herself).

XI

In the first volume of *Atalantis,* Dela pillories Sir Richard Steele, at one time a very close friend, whom throughout life she alternately caressed and cursed, or as Leigh Hunt says, "loved and lampooned."

Steele started the *Tatler* on April 12th, 1709. It came out three times a week, and in the sixth number "Sappho" is described. It was some late eighteenth century critic who suggested that Sappho was Eliza Haywood; but there is nothing in the description of that classic lady which tallies with Mrs. Haywood's history. Mrs. Haywood was certainly not more than twenty, was unknown at the time, had, so far as can be found, done nothing imprudent and was apparently on the point of marrying a clergyman. On the other hand, what Steele writes appears perfectly descriptive of Mrs. Manley:

"I am just come from visiting Sappho, a fine lady who writes verses, sings, dances and can say and do whatever she pleases, without the imputation of anything to injure her character; for she is so well known to have no passion but self-love; or folly, but affectation; that now upon any occasion, they only cry, 'It is her way!' and 'That is so like her!'" He further describes the conversation, in which Sappho discourses of Milton and Dryden, in which "she said a thousand good things at random, but so strangely mixed, that you would be apt to say, all her wit is mere good luck, and not the effect of reason and judgment." Steele mentions Sappho again in the *Tatler,* as visiting his sister Jenny, when she compared some lines upon love from a play of Suckling's with a verse of Dryden's: and then showed a distinct and somewhat haughty displeasure on the reading of a letter making light of love.

What we know of Dela fits all this. There are other comments upon her capacity for uttering witty things seem-

ingly without intention; her past was assuredly such that no imputation could injure her character; Steele pays Sappho no compliment upon her beauty, and Swift says Dela was but homely; and if there was one sentiment in life which she regarded as serious, it was that of love. It was Leigh Hunt, in *Men, Women and Books,* who first identified Manley with Steele's Sappho, and his identification seems fairly convincing.

Yet at the same time Dela was nursing a grudge against Steele. During her wanderings with Justice and Virtue in Atalantis, Dela takes them to The Prado, otherwise Hyde Park, to watch the carriages and riders there. Suddenly she cries: "Do you see that black beau, stuck up in a pert chariot, thick-set, his eyes lost in his head, hanging eyebrows, broad face and tallow complexion. . . . He's called Monsieur Le Ingrat, he shapes his manners to his name, and is exquisitely so in all he does; has an inexhaustible fund of dissimulation . . . has a world of wit and genteel repartee: he's a poet too, and was very favourably received by the town, especially in his first performance, where, if you will take my opinion, he exhausted most of his stock; for what he has since produced, seem but faint copies of that agreeable original."

She goes on to tell that "almost t'other day he was but a wretched common trooper" who had the luck to write a small poem, which he dedicated to Lord Cutts, who encouraged him and gave him a standard in his regiment. His morals were loose, his principles nothing but pretence, his only desire to make his fortune, and so keen was this desire that he sought the philosopher's stone and spent all that he had in the search.

It is obvious that Steele knew Mrs. Manley's "husband," whom the anonymous annotator of the B.M. copy of the *Atalantis* declares to be John Manley; but, if events reveal Dela's life better than she does herself, she was living at that time with the man whom she really regarded as a husband, and that was John Tilly. She tells

O Sacred Truth inspire and rule my Page,—
So may reforming Satire mend a vicious Age.
Whilst thy Enlightning Rays adorn & guard thy Place,
Astreas glorious Form Surveys the Race,—
And Virtue wears the bright Ormondas Face.

MARY DE LA RIVIERE MANLEY

Frontispiece to the first edition of "The New Atalantis"

Facing page 119

the story as if it were of other people and not herself and husband:

"This gentleman had an airy wife who pretended to be a sort of director in the laws of poetry, and believed herself to be a very good judge of the excellencies and defects of writing," which certainly describes herself. She was mightily taken with Steele "on the score of his wit," and prayed him often to favour her. Being told of the narrowness of his circumstances she did what she could to help him, and even gave him credit to her midwife to assist a girl who had sworn an unborn child to him.

She heard all his schemes, how a great City hall had been taken and furnaces were being built that there might be room to transmute abundantly. A certain operator was in charge, who, finding that money had now run short, was persuading Steele to sell his commission that they might buy mercury and drugs. Dela got her husband's permission to tell all that he and she suspected; and having asked Steele to an afternoon party, took that opportunity to explain things.

At that time she was expecting a child to be born. It is vain to ask how many children she had! There was John Manley's "wretched son" of whom we never hear again; presumably this second child was born in due course, but it disappears before we know it is there. There may have been others, but they are not mentioned.

However this afternoon "there was a merry up-setting of the gossips," "Monsieur" [Steele] made one; his genius sparkled among the ladies, he made love to them all in their turn, whispered soft things to this, ogled t'other, kissed the hand of that, went upon his knees to a fourth, and so infinitely pleased them, that they all cried he was the life of the company. The sick lady [Dela] had gone to repose herself upon her bed, and sent for Monsieur to come to her alone, for she had something to say to him. She hints that Steele was flattered by her summons and wondered whether he should be kind or cruel, "for the lady was no

beauty." This criticism of her looks she makes on several occasions.

She talked to him about his craze for seeking the philosopher's stone, warning him not to sell his commission, for all the world would laugh at him, and he would not find a friend to help him to another; she told him that if he sold it and gave the money to his operator, he would probably never see the man again, small as the amount would be. Steele was astounded by her words but felt them to be true, "he knew not what to say, only begged leave to retire," and pulling his hat over his eyes went away. Steele was at this time heavily in debt, and the only thing he saved from the chemical shipwreck was his commission. Dela still took every opportunity of serving him, warning him when she heard of creditors becoming active, and he used to term her his guardian angel.

"But fortune came his way; she threw him to seek for refuge in a house where was a lady of vast possessions." (Dela always exaggerated other people's wealth.) This was Mrs. Margaret Stretch, an elderly woman, whom Steele married, being it is said more attracted by her money than by herself; after her death he married "his dear Prue," otherwise Mary Scurlock, an heiress on the death of her mother and according to Dela "a cried-up beauty."

XII

When John Tilly and Dela separated, trouble descended most heavily upon the woman. After vainly trying to keep her place in the world, she found that if she could only raise her fare, "not above ten pieces," to go into the country, she would find a home among friends; and eventually she asked Steele to lend her the amount. He promised but did not send, and in the end he refused her "in two lines by pretence of incapacity; nay, refused a second time to oblige her with two pieces, upon an extraordinary exigency, to help her out of some new trouble."

This was why she attacked Steele in her *Atalantis*. For a time Steele ignored the attack, but on September 3rd there was an article in the *Tatler* by one who signed himself Tobiah Greenhat, commenting upon "Epicene, the writer of Memoirs from the Mediterranean," "who by some artificial poisons conveyed by smells, has within these few weeks brought many persons of both sexes to an untimely fate; and what is more surprising has, contrary to her profession, with the same odours revived others who had long since been drowned in the whirlpool of Lethe."

On the appearance of this, Dela wrote an indignant letter to Steele, which letter he answered at once:

"Madam, I have received a letter from you, wherein you tax me, as if I were Bickerstaff, with falling upon you as author of *Atalantis,* and the person who honoured me with a character in that celebrated piece. What has happened formerly between us can be of no use to either to repeat. I solemnly assure you you wrong me in this, as much as you know you do in all else you have been pleased to say of me. I had not money when you did me the favour to ask a loan of a trifling sum of me. I had the greatest sense imaginable of the kind notice you gave me when I was going to my ruin; and am so far from retaining an inclination to revenge the inhumanity with which you have treated me, that I give myself a satisfaction in that you have cancelled with injuries a friendship, which I should never have been able to return. This will convince you how little I am an Ingrate; for I believe you will allow, no one that is so mean as to be forgetful of kindnesses ever fails in returning injuries. . . . Your sex, as well as your quality of a gentlewoman (a justice you would not do my birth and education) shall always preserve you against the pen of your provoked, most humble servant."

It seems that Steele, who was complaining of Dela's description of him in the *Atalantis,* was not the author of

the provocative paragraph in the *Tatler,* which has been ascribed to Dean Swift.

The second volume of the *New Atalantis* was published in October, 1709, and had a "succès de scandale." Among other people Lady Mary Wortley Montagu waited for it eagerly. She wrote to London for a copy, being sure she would get it by Saturday. "Saturday came and no book. God forgive me, I had certainly wished the lady who was to send it me hanged, but for the hopes it was to come by the Nottingham carrier, and then I should have it on Monday, but after waiting Monday and Tuesday, I find it is not come."*

When at last she received the book Lady Mary wrote, "But do you know what has happened to the unfortunate authoress? People are offended at the liberty she used and she is taken into custody. Miserable is the fate of writers! If they are agreeable they are offensive, and if dull they starve. I lament the loss of the other parts which we should have had . . . but now she will serve as a scarecrow to frighten people from attempting anything but heavy panegyric with names at length and false characters so daubed with flattery that they are the severest kind of lampoon."

"George Paston" herself says in criticism, "Although Mrs. Manley's style is slovenly and her love scenes 'the worse for being warm,' it is easy to understand that a novel about real human beings would be a refreshing change from the romances of d'Urfé or Scudéry."

Dela's offence was not that she scandalised people, but that she attacked individually members of the existing government. So a warrant was granted against the printer and publishers of the *New Atalantis* and also against the author. The news soon spread and John Tidcomb ("Lovemore") went to Dela to offer aid. He found her in heroic mood, resolved to surrender, and so save the others from imprisonment. She had, she said, become a misanthrope,

* *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Her Times.* By George Paston.

a Timon, a man-hater, all the world was out of humour with her, and she with all the world. She did no more by others than others had done by her, tattle of frailties; the town had reported tenfold against her in matters of which she was wholly innocent whereas she only told old stories already known to the world.

Tidcomb asked her how she would like to go to Newgate, and she said, " very well, since it was to discharge her conscience." Tidcomb offered to take her to France and place her in the court of the ex-Queen, but she refused saying the Queen was the greatest bigot over Catholicism. Then he offered to take her to Switzerland or any country she liked, and she replied by asking what would happen to the publishers and the printer. In the end he left her vowing he would not go to see her when in gaol.

So Dela surrendered herself and was examined by John Hopkins, Under Secretary of State. He tried to discover who was concerned with her in writing her books, and how she had got her information. With humility and sorrow for having offended, she denied that anyone helped her or that she wrote for anything but her own amusement. When this was scoffed at she said then it must be inspiration, because knowing her own innocence she could account for it in no other way. The Under Secretary replied that " inspiration was upon a good account, but her writings were stark naught." She told him with an air full of penitence that that might be true, but it was as true that there were evil angels as well as good; so that what she had written might still be by inspiration. In fact her wit was so keen that she eluded every accusation, and entirely defeated the efforts of the judges to cross-examine her.

She was sent to prison on Saturday, October 29th, 1709, being allowed neither book nor pencil and being " most tyrannically and barbarously insulted by the fellow and his wife who had her in keeping! " but she nobly refrained at the end from reporting them. Her " accomplices " were discharged on the following Tuesday, but she was in

custody a full week, when she was admitted to bail. It was during this imprisonment that she made overtures of friendship to Steele and again requested his help.

This imprisonment brought the *Atalantis* books into great prominence, and it was said that "Men were afraid of her wit and ladies talked of, at, and against her, behind their fans, as a dreadful intriguing hussy."

Here is a specimen of her criticism of the man of her day. "If a man of estate has a mind to be thought a genius, he has but to fall in labour of some little trifle, a prologue, epilogue, song, or flourish to Cœlia, and be generous to the next poet he can get his friend to advise to dedicate to him, and presently he's Virgil and Mæcenas too."

The prosecution was dropped on February 14th, 1710.

XIII

The first two *Atalantis'* volumes had been prefaced with extravagant dedications, both addressed, "To His Grace Henry, Duke of Beaufort, Marquis and Earl of Worcester, Earl of Glamorgan, Baron Herbert, and Lord of Chepstow, Ragland and Gower."

The first dedication began as follows—and continued thus to the extent of four pages:

"My Lord, how vast must be the ambition of an unknown and mere translator, to dare to hope from so great a Prince his most noble protection for so small a trifle? But he who enters not the lists can never pretend to win the race; this attempt, how dazzling so ever, had never been mine, without a proportionable degree of admiration for those heroic qualities conspicuous in Your Grace; thence inspired, my presumption may hope to avoid your frowns, though the performance prove not so happy as to meet your smiles."

The dedication to the second volume is rather worse. Part of it runs: "The first volume of the *New Atalantis* flourished under Your Grace's auspicious sunshine; un-

known, unfriended, of an obscure original, a nameless translator, no party interested in its favour, or ready to prepossess others: its whole hopes and merits summed up in the great name of Beaufort in the front. An attempt in me, I confess, so daring that, like a hero who has gained an almost impossible victory, I scarce believe the conquest, but still trembling, look back with wonder at my own ambition, how it durst put itself to that eminent trial, which was mightiest? Your Grace's unequalled goodness, or my unequalled presumption."

This dedication ran to seven pages, and its extravagance was but according to the custom of the times, for a writer in those days had to do a lot of begging to gain a living and found flattering their vanity the best open sesame to the purses of the wealthy.

This was not Steele's way however, and a few days after Dela was released from prison *The Tatler* contained an article attacking her and her works. The theme was libel and satire which are "a sort of playing with the four-and-twenty letters, and throwing them into names and characters, without sense, truth or wit. . . . The hero or patron in a libel is but a scavenger to carry off the dirt, and by that very employment is the filthiest creature in the street. . . . Dedications are frequently ridiculous . . . it is telling a man that all the men whom the world thinks well of have been pulled from their pedestals, so now he can rule that world and show what a great man he is," etc.

Mrs. Manley determined to be revenged for this, and therefore dedicated her third volume to Richard Steele, under his pen-name of Isaac Bickerstaff. It was a malicious dedication, in which she declares that fear is our strongest passion and therefore she dedicates her book to him in the hope of preventing any further well-bred reflections from so polite a pen as his; even *though* he says a patron is the filthiest creature in the street. Then she reproduces his letter to her, already given, and comments satirically upon his opinions.

Steele probably had no difficulty in knowing what she was doing, for on the very day that the first volume of Eginardus—the third of the *New Atalantis*—was published with this dedication his *Tatler* included a further flagellation of her. He demanded: "What pretence is there in nature for me to write to a great man and tell him: 'My lord, because your grace is a duke, your grace's father before you was an earl, his lordship's father was a baron, and his lordship's father both a wise and a rich man: I, Isaac Bickerstaff, am obliged, and could not possibly forbear addressing to you the following treatise?'"

Then he undertakes to punish those creatures who write libellous things; he will "preserve them to mortal infamy. Their names shall give fresh offence many ages hence and be detested a thousand years after the commission of their crime." His conclusion runs: "A female author has dedicated a piece to me, wherein she would make my name, as she has others, the introduction of whatever is to follow in her book; and has spoke some panegyrical things which I know not how to return, for want of better acquaintance with the lady, and consequently being out of a capacity to give her praise or blame."

For the time Dela was beaten, but later, when a new edition of the *Atalantis* was published she made a further attack upon Steele, which however contained nothing fresh. Her fourth volume was dedicated to Louisa of Savoy, Countess of Angouleme, otherwise Mrs. Masham, the Tory successor to the Whig Duchess of Marlborough. It begins, "You no sooner appeared, Madam, but we breathed a new air from the sweet odour of solid virtue! sound religion! unfeigned piety! unaffected generosity, affectionate reverence to the throne!"

Early in 1711 Daniel Defoe complimented Mrs. Manley by issuing a small book entitled "*Atalantis Major*. Printed in Olreeky, the chief City of the north part of Atalantis Major." This was a "spoof" historical narrative of re-

markable happenings in the great island "lying in the Ducaledonian Ocean."

It will be noted that Steele declared that he did not know "the female author" who had dedicated her book to him, but three years later he told a very different story. Dela was then writing political articles for the *Examiner,* a paper produced by Dean Swift. One article concerned itself with the Earl of Nottingham, who had turned Whig. To help her argument against him, Mrs. Manley declared that the Earl's daughter, Lady Charlotte, was seen knotting in St. James's Chapel "during divine service in the immediate presence both of God and Her Majesty, who were affronted together."

This was irresistible to Steele who, *The Tatler* having ceased, was then producing *The Guardian,* and he fell upon her in wrath and then in raillery. The latter part of his article, published May 12, 1713, runs:

"I will give myself no manner of liberty to make guesses at him [the writer of the article], if I may say him: for though sometimes I have been told by familiar friends, that they saw me such a time talking to the *Examiner,* others, who have rallied me upon the sins of my youth, tell me it is credibly reported that I have formerly lain with the *Examiner.* I have carried my point, and rescued innocence from calumny; and it is nothing to me, whether the *Examiner* writes against me in the character of an estranged friend [Dean Swift] or an exasperated mistress [Mrs. Manley]."

XIV

Court Intrigues in a Collection of Original Letters from the Island of the New Atalantis was published in 1711. In the first letter, one of the mysteries of society in the time of William III is elucidated.

There suddenly appeared in high circles a young man named Edward Wilson, generally known as Beau Wilson.

His family were impoverished Norfolk gentlefolk, yet he took a great house, hired many servants, possessed carriages, horses and wealth. He also did not forget to portion his sisters and help the other members of his family. He seemed an ordinary young man, not clever, but good-looking and pleasant. The puzzle was whence did he get his money? People wondered and talked, but no one could tell.

Dela however claimed to have solved the mystery. She tells how a discharged and penniless waiting woman came to her and, probably hoping for some reward, told her a story about one of the great ladies. One evening, in 1692 or 1693, the lady and her maid were walking in the gardens around Hyde Park, when they saw a dejected young man lying on the grass. They passed him several times, the lady studying him sharply, but he paid no heed at all to them. So her ladyship drove away and left her waiting woman to carry out her instructions.

She accosted the young man and found him bent on suicide; he had been discharged from his ship and had not a penny nor any prospects. The woman prevailed upon him to accompany her to London in a hired vehicle. (Hyde Park was not *in* London then.) Before they parted she gave him a sum of money, telling him to dress himself in expensive clothes and take a good lodging. He was to meet her again the next night at twelve at a spot near St. James's Park. He must then do exactly as she told him, or forfeit all future good.

Needless to say Mr. Edward Wilson agreed to all conditions and on presenting himself the next night had to submit to being blindfolded and taken a distance in a carriage. They entered a house and when the bandage was removed, he found himself in a large room lit by one candle, and in this dim light he saw a lady, but could not see her face. The maid disappeared and he remained with the lady two hours, receiving from her on leaving a large sum of money with instructions to secure a house and start

in London as a man of substance. The conditions attached to this arrangement were that he was to visit the lady whenever summoned, was never to attempt to see her face or to discover who she was. If he broke these rules or betrayed her confidence, death would be the penalty.

The young man agreed to all this, and for some time was absolutely obedient, and probably enjoyed the curiosity of the multitude ever ready to surround a rich man. But there came a time when his one passionate desire was to break one of the imposed conditions, he *must* see the face of his beautiful lady! He became importunate and troublesome, and had not the sense to remember the penalty. Then in a rash moment he betrayed himself, saying that in the park he had heard her voice in a carriage, and had seen a diamond on her finger which he had given her.

He had signed his own death warrant! A few days afterward a man named John Law met him and fastened a quarrel upon him. Words grew high and they went to fight it out in Bloomsbury Square. At the first pass Beau Wilson was run through and died. Law was condemned to death for foul play, but in the end escaped mysteriously from prison; and lived to win fame as a financier, as founder of the first Bank in France and, as originator of the Mississippi Scheme, was responsible for the French equivalent of the South Sea Bubble.

"Now," said Society, "we shall know where Beau Wilson got his money." But search produced no evidence, not a scrap of paper and scarcely any money. To the world he remained a mystery. Even Dela dared not tell that the veiled lady was Elizabeth Villiers, mistress of King William III, and afterwards Countess of Orkney.

XV

Dean Swift had known the Manley brothers John and Isaac for a considerable time, had indeed been instrumental in securing the position of Postmaster for Ireland for the latter, while he considered John as his very good friend.

He became acquainted with Mrs. Manley probably in 1711; and though at first he made fun of her literary style, he grew to have a real respect for her powers. After the publication of the *New Atalantis* he wrote to Addison:

"I read your character in Mrs. Manley's noble memoirs of Europe. It seems to me as if she had about two thousand epithets and fine words packed up in a bag; and that she pulled them out by handfuls, and strewed them on her paper, where about once in five hundred times they happen to be right."

Later—in December, 1710—Swift, writing to Stella, says, "Rediculous, madam. I suppose you mean ridiculous; let me have no more of that; 'tis the author of the *Atalantis*'s spelling." He might have added that it was not *always* spelt with an e in the *Atalantis*.

In spite of Dela's bag of two thousand epithets, Swift eventually asked her help in producing the *Examiner*, which he had projected in Tory rivalry to the Whig *Tatler*. Her first contribution to that journal, or rather the first *Examiner* that she produced (for each issue dealt with but one topic) was in 1711, probably in March, and it was an account of what passed at the examination of the Marquis de Guiscard at the Cock Pit on March 8th, 1711. Swift intended to write the article himself, but was afraid to offend either St. John or Harley. Guiscard was a dissolute Frenchman who having left France for France's good, in London grew dissatisfied with his treatment and started a treasonable correspondence with France. For this he was examined in the presence of various officials, and suddenly, losing self-control, he caught up a penknife, rushed forward and stabbed Harley twice in the chest, the blade breaking in the second wound. It was felt by all present that he wanted to get at St. John, but Harley being nearest vented his spite on him. Swift wrote the first paragraph of the article, then handed it over to Mrs.

Manley, and she certainly wrote so diplomatically that neither gentleman could complain that he was deprived of his due as a hero. Harley recovered, but Guiscard practically committed suicide in prison by refusing all help, medical and otherwise, to say nothing of food and necessities.

After this Dela wrote various political pamphlets more or less suggested by Swift, forming the last six parts of the *Examiner,* the last one, and the best of all the *Examiner* articles, according to Swift, being a *Defence of the Duke of M[arlboroug]h.*

Early in July, 1711, Swift went to keep an appointment with Lord Peterborough, and in the waiting room came upon Mrs. Manley, who was trying to get from one of the heads of the party she had been so industriously serving some pension or reward for her writings. The Dean seconded her warmly, and said he hoped they would do something for the poor woman. He evidently learned Dela's story of her child-marriage, for at the beginning of 1713 he was lamenting the serious illness of John Manley, saying to Stella that he could not live a month, adding that he himself would feel his loss deeply as John was one of his chief supporters. Yet after John's death, nearly a year later, he said in answer to a letter from Stella about Isaac Manley: "Your arguments are pure ones . . . he has lost a kind brother . . . ! Why, his brother was a beast and did him ten times more harm than good!" From which it may be inferred that he had lately heard something much to John's discredit.

XVI

Some time in 1711 a friendship arose between Dela Manley and Alderman Barber, a City printer of great wealth, and a few years later one of the few who made a fortune through the South Sea Bubble. He was not a beautiful man and it was said that avarice was his pre-

dominant vice; but there was some kindliness in him, and perhaps by that he engaged Dela's interest, so that she, a forlorn woman, consented to share his home. It was not the authors who made much money out of their books in those days. Barber's biographer says that he certainly made a good bargain in the matter, for he acquired large sums from "her writings, the *Atalantis* [in this case he mentions thousands of pounds], her novels, the play of *Lucius,* with many political pamphlets." He adds that she brought Barber acquainted with Lord Bolingbroke, Dr. Swift, Mr. Prior, and others, who all made him their printer.

In January, 1712, Dela was ill, and the Alderman wrote to Swift saying that she had dropsy and a sore leg; and that he was afraid she would not live long. Swift adds when telling Stella, "I am heartily sorry for her; she has very generous principles for one of her sort, and a great deal of good sense and invention. She is about forty; very homely and very fat." However, she did not die; but continued to live in material comfort at the printer's house, though two years later she again had a short illness.

In ordinary matters of life Barber was underbred and coarse; "he had many defects and but few virtues to weigh in the opposite scale; and indeed were I to give an impartial account, most of the passages I could mention concerning him would not be greatly to his advantage," says his biographer.

The anonymous biography of Alderman Barber is supposed to be the work of several people. A reference to Mrs. Manley at the beginning runs, "How have I heard her compassionately regretting the miseries of others, and never her own, but when they prevented her exalted charity to them." Now this sentence, perhaps a little differently arranged, appears in the long exordium to *The Stage-Coach Journey to Exeter,* and in one other place. In each case it is not supposed to be written by Mrs. Manley; but in each case there is a suspicion that she was the author, a suspicion which may be extended to at least part of the *Life of Alder-*

man Barber, although that inchoate work was not published until long after her death.

There was one kindness that he did her, or that she exacted from him, and that was the companionship of her sister Cordelia, now Widow Markendale. When Cordelia also became a member of the printer's household is not stated, but she remained such till her death in 1731.

Dela's tragedy, *Lucius, First Christian King of Great Britain,* was put on the stage at Drury Lane in 1717, and was the most successful of her plays. In that year Steele is said to have written but two things, one of which was the Prologue to *Lucius,* while Matthew Prior wrote the Epilogue. When the play was published (by the Alderman) Dela dedicated it to Steele, saying that "it was but an act of justice. She knew no greater mortification than when she reflected upon the severities which had flowed from her pen, and she rejoiced in this public retribution."

Steele did his utmost to promote the success of the play and she wrote to him: "I know you so well, that I am assured you already think I have, on this subject said too much. . . . I shall say no more, trusting to the gallantry of your temper for further proofs of friendship; and allowing you, like a true woman, all the good qualities in the world now I am pleased with you. I remain, with the greatest truth, Sir, your most humble, most faithful, and most obliged servant."

In 1720 *Lucius* had a second run for the benefit of the author and Steele mentioned this in an article in the *Theatre,* saying that he had had the impatience to write something like satire in return for the liberties that ingenious lady took with him in certain of her writings. The anger of a woman, according to all the rules of chivalry, is never to be returned, but abated by persuasion and submission.

Thus the long-standing quarrel ended in mutual goodwill!

During these years Dela wrote many political pamphlets

and some poems. She began a volume of "novels," but distress of mind, caused by the growing neglect of her by the Alderman, made her abandon it. But only for a time; for, under the title of *The Power of Love; in Seven Novels,* it was published in 1720. In the same year was published Anthony Hammond's *Miscellany of Original Poems,* which included two short pieces "by Mrs. Manley" that may be cited as examples of Dela's lyric muse. One of these is addressed to the Countess of Bristol:

"Long had my mind, unknowing how to soar,
In humble prose been trained nor aimed at more:
Near the famed sisters, never durst aspire
To sound a verse, or touch the tuneful lyre.
Till Bristol's charms, dissolved the native cold;
Bade me survey her eyes, and thence be bold.
Thee, lovely Bristol! Thee, with pride I choose,
The first, and only subject of my muse.
That durst transport me like the bird of Jove,
To face the immortal source of light above!
Such are thy kindred beams—
So blessings, with a bounteous hand they give,
So they create and make Creation live."

That the Countess of Bristol was not to remain the "only subject of her muse" was shown by other lines addressed "To J. Moore, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxon":

"Oxford, for all thy fops and smarts,
Let this prodigious youth atone,
Whilst others frisk and dress at hearts,
He makes thy better part thy own.

Yet small addition canst thou give,
Nature gave all her wealth before:
How little can this son receive?
How full already is his store.

Others advance by slow degrees,
  Long, long they feed, before they taste;
Their letters, but with years increase
  And good digestion comes the last.

But his vast mind completely formed,
  Was thoroughly finished when begun;
So all at once the world was warmed,
  On the great birth-day of the sun."

It was in March, 1724, not long before she died, that Curll, the "famous and infamous publisher," to quote Daniel Defoe, told Walpole that Mrs. Manley had a fifth volume of her *Atalantis* ready printed off; which was designed to give an account of a Sovereign [George I] and his Ministers, who are endeavouring to overturn the Constitution which their pretence is to protect, etc. The book never appeared, and Curll would scarcely have suppressed it unless he had received an adequate reward.

The growing trouble in the printer's house on Lambeth or Lambert's Hill, off Thames Street, was caused in a very simple way. Another servant was needed in the house, and the Alderman, having to go into the country, brought back with him a hefty country girl, who was ready to do the most menial work in the place for a wage of £4 a year. The Alderman's biographer says she was "an ignorant and insolent country wench of as mean an extraction as his own." Well, like to like, the printer felt the attraction and the buxom lass gradually engaged his attentions. This, it is said, broke Mrs. Manley's heart. However she could have had no illusions about a man like Barber; she was between forty and fifty years old, and likely to feel much more hurt by rudeness than by lack of ardour; and that it seems was what she had to bear. "Such was the insolence of his behaviour to her that she justly gave him the name of Tyrant, and in a few years might be said to assume the Brute in forsaking the polite

mistress to take up with the ignorant servant wench. Let the world judge how unworthy Barber was of such a friend."

The Alderman fell ill, or thought he was ill, and the doctor scarcely knew what was the matter with him, so Dela suggested the usual thing in such a situation, he wanted a change and a holiday. Why not travel? go to Italy? She talked about it to Dr. Friend, who backed up this advice and the Alderman considered it.

He had never been to Italy, but he knew it, knew it well. Had he not read Virgil's Pastorals in Dryden's translation? Did he not know that the warm and sunny south was inhabited by shepherds and shepherdesses, making flowery garlands under the cheerful sun, singing and piping to each other, while lambs danced around them? He brooded over it, and desired more and more to wander in such a care-free country, to take his leisure with nothing to upset him. So he went, eager to take part in the simple life. Poor man! his disappointment when he vainly went to look for his shepherds was very keen, and curiously, not finding what he expected, his eyes were blind to all the real charms of Italy.

There was another matter which gave him a lasting sense of loss. He went, at dead of night, when all servants were in their beds, to call upon the Chevalier, to whom he carried from English Royalists bills of exchange for £50,000; and he did not leave the presence of the deposed Majesty before he had promised to remit from his own pocket a certain sum each year, which he duly sent with great pain of mind.

Before he got home he learned with horror that this secret visit had become known in England, and when he reached Calais was afraid to go further. He did not know what to do, and needed a woman's wit to help him out. He could not for the worst of all reasons send for Dela, and had to be content with his Dulcinea. She came flaunting in velvet as the lady of a City magnate; but the

only thing she could advise him to do was to hire a fishing boat and its owner, and so cross the Channel. This they did and as the Alderman put his foot on shore a King's Messenger took him by the shoulder. He was taken prisoner, but escaped punishment, probably not being considered dangerous enough to warrant it.

His biographer says that before Barber left Italy Mrs. Manley was dead. She was attacked by "a violent fit of the colic which kept her upon the rack no less than five days, and carried her off with its exquisite torture." She died at Barber's printing house on Lambeth Hill. Her corpse was very decently interred in the middle aisle of the church of St. Bennet, Paul's Wharf, where on a marble gravestone is the following inscription to her deserving memory:

"Here lies the body of
Mrs. De la Rivière Manley
Daughter of Sir Roger Manley, Kt.
Who, suitable to her birth and education, was acquainted with several parts of knowledge; and was the most polite writer both in the French and the English tongues. This accomplishment, together with a greater natural stock of wit, made her conversation agreeable to all who knew her, and her writings be universally read with pleasure.
She Died July 11, 1724."

Upon her character the biographer comments: "Never was she vindictive against the most inveterate enemy. The innate softness of her soul rendered her deportment equally obliging to all beholders: never did she resent but with the strictest justice, and with equal humanity forgave the offender."

What was the real illness from which she suffered? Colic has ceased to be an accredited cause for death, and when a patient succumbs to it experts get to work to find out what foreign substance or natural disturbance has pro-

duced such acute pain. However, there were no post-mortems at that time and poor Dela died of colic.

Dulcinea was free to play the mistress in the Alderman's house, though her reign was not allowed to be undisputed. For the wandering fancy of the City printer introduced another lady into his assorted family to soothe his idle hours. "His principal intimates since the death of the ingenious Mrs. Manley were one of his servants and Miss D. . . . . ., both of whom had suffered in reputation by him, the servant bullied him out of his whole estate, the lady got £1,000." However, he did not die until January 2nd, 1741, so Dulcinea served a long apprenticeship before wealth became her own.

Of Cordelia Markendale we are told "that she lingered on a most irksome life for seven years, under the insolent treatment of Barber and his spinsters, and was at last released by death and buried near her sister."

Mary de la Rivière Manley's will, dated October 6, 1723, was proved on September 28, 1724.

CHAPTER III

SUSANNA CENTLIVRE: "THE COOK'S WIFE OF BUCKINGHAM COURT"

The leading English woman dramatist—Tendency to improving taste—Mystery of Susanna's origin—Contradictory stories—Romance of Cambridge escapade—Disguised as "Cousin Jack" at the University—Sent to London: twice married and widowed—Long law case on behalf of her son—Actress and playwright—Public attitude towards women's plays—Tragic beginning—Turns to comedy with success—A duel with "files"—Complacent claim to have improved Molière—A playwright with a purpose—A play refused!—Goes to Bath as author-actress—Meets and marries the Queen's "Yeoman of the Mouth"—At home in Spring Gardens—"It is a woman's"!—Susanna in "The New Atalantis"?—Founder of a stage family—Explaining a failure—A Goldsmith parallel—Farce inspired by Sir Richard Steele—A "Marplot" sequel—Forty guineas from a dedicatee—An ill-starred piece—Another success and tribute to the actors—First dedication to a coming King—In praise of the Hanoverians—Uncompromising Protestant and Whig—Two farces fail to pass the censor—Another attempt at tragedy—Her most popular comedy—"The real Simon Pure"—Scanty details of Susanna's later life.

I

IN some of its aspects the story of the woman known to fame as Susanna Centlivre is as queer as that of any of our quintet, though her position in our literary history is not less assured than that of Aphra Behn. She may be regarded, indeed, as England's chief woman

dramatist, for she maintained some measure of stage popularity far longer than did the earlier pioneer, Joseph Knight having recorded that two of her comedies still remained in the list of acting plays as recently as 1887. When she wrote, during the first quarter of the 18th century, taste was changing; the sensual reaction against puritanic restraint had perhaps partially expended itself; the diatribes of Jeremy Collier and other protestants had not been without effect; possibly the coming of a queen regnant had not been without some tendency towards improvement in the taste of the time; and there were thoughtful men seeking to foster that tendency.

The change was of course but gradual, and in much of Mrs. Centlivre's work there is such coarseness of expression as has long since ceased to be seemly, and though this is less pronounced than in most of Aphra Behn's work, and there is far less of what might be termed the licentiousness of situation, the literary quality of Aphra's writing is by far the greater. But if the times were mending—and improvement was to be hastened under the genial, humorous influence of Sir Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, formed to delight at once and *teach* the age—coarseness of expression continued long to be regarded as venial when it formed part of the dialogue of stage plays; so that in reading much of the dramatic writing of the time we have to make allowance for the fact that a verbal license was still fairly general, and should qualify our censure with common sense.

II

The early years of Susanna are wrapped in mystery even more remarkable than that in the case of Aphra Behn—but though in some respects the mystery is similar we have nothing so nearly definite as a plausible but by no means conclusive entry in a baptismal register to be cited in the case of the later writer. Even as Aphra may have had

one of two patronymics, so may Susanna according to the diverse but scanty accounts that we have of her life. Little in the nature of a separate memoir of her appears to have been written until nearly forty years after her death, when her collected plays were prefaced by what purported to be "a new account of her life," but was really nothing more than half-a-dozen pages, the first two-thirds of which were given up to a feminist outburst, and the rest to a few biographical notes, dateless but for the year of her death, and that, one of the few dates in her story that can be definitely determined, given inaccurately.

It seems advisable, in the circumstances, to give both the stories current concerning Susanna's early years, and then seek to establish a record that shall at least be approximately correct, for it is difficult to believe that either has no substratum of truth though some of the details are obviously irreconcilable. Direct contemporary evidence is scanty indeed. The principal works of reference (including the *D.N.B.* and the *E.B.*) give the date of Susanna's birth as having been about 1667, while Baker's *Biographia Dramatica* gives it as "about 1680"—a somewhat considerable discrepancy. Joseph Knight (in the *D.N.B.*), summarising one story of her origin, describes her as "said to have been the daughter of a Mr. Freeman, of Holbeach, Lincolnshire, a man of some position, who suffered on account of his political and religious opinions after the Restoration. After the confiscation of his estate he went with his wife, the daughter of a Mr. Marham or Markham, a gentleman of good estate at Lynn Regis, in Norfolk, who was also obnoxious to the authorities, to Ireland, where Susanna is by some supposed to have been born. At this early point her biographies commence to be at issue." They begin, however, to be at issue before that point as the writer of that statement himself proceeds to show. For one of the earliest biographies of Susanna that we have in print—that of Abel Boyer, to be referred to later—says "her father's name, if I mistake not, was Rawkins"; while the

brief memoir prefixed to the 1761 edition of her *Plays* hints at her having been born at Holbeach.

The most definite statement that we have towards ascertaining the year of Susanna's birth is that she was "near forty-five years old" at the time of her death, which would make the year of her birth 1678, and we are inclined to accept that date as being approximately correct, for it fits in with the story of her successive essays in matrimony and their duration.

Perhaps we should give here the earliest known summary of her story, as being that which is generally accepted. Though slight it may well be believed to have been based on information supplied by the dramatist herself, and so—short of the unlikely discovery of new material—is the most likely to be true at least as to such matters as her family name and so forth. This earliest account of Susanna Centlivre appears in *The Poetical Register: or, the Lives and Characters of all the English Poets. With an Account of Their Writings,* by Giles Jacob, vol. i. 1719. From Jacob we learn that "she was inclined to poetry when very young, having composed a song before she was seven years old;" precocity that affords another parallel with the Aphra Behn tradition. The account, which prefaces a list of her plays, runs thus:

"This gentlewoman, now living, is a daughter of one Mr. Freeman, late of Holbeach, in Lincolnshire, who married a daughter of Mr. Marham, a gentleman of good estate at Lynn Regis, in the county of Norfolk. There was formerly an estate in the family of her father; but he being a Dissenter, and a zealous Parliamentarian, was so very much persecuted at the Restoration that he was necessitated to fly into Ireland, and his estate was confiscated: nor was the family of her mother free from the severities of those times, they being likewise Parliamentarians. Her education was in the country; and her father dying when she was but three years of age; and her mother not living till

she was twelve, what improvements she has made, have been merely by her own industry and application. She was married before the age of fifteen, to a nephew of Sir Stephen Fox. This gentleman living with her but a year, she afterwards married Mr. Carrol, an officer in the Army; and survived him likewise, in the space of a year and a half."

Though quaintly phrased that closing sentence suggests plainly enough that the first marriage was dissolved by death and was not a mere liaison terminated at the whim of the gentleman, as some writers have interpreted it. Assuming as we may fairly do that the subject herself supplied the information, we can but regret that Susanna did not say when and where she was born, nor where she received her education "in the country." If we are correct in placing her birth about 1678 it is possible that her parents had returned from Ireland, for though it is said her father fled to that country it is not said that it was after his marriage, nor is it said that her mother's family went to Ireland also, that statement having been subsequently added to the skimpy account afforded by Giles Jacob.

III

In following the vague and meagre record of the future dramatist's childhood we learn nothing of how and where she lived, or how it was that she received sufficient education to become an accepted playwright in early womanhood; we pass immediately from her being completely orphaned at the age of twelve to her early marriage. One romantic story, however, that is recorded would presumably bridge this gap, and would account for some measure of education, though it seems inherently improbable and to savour rather of fiction than of fact. It is said to have been written during her lifetime, but did not appear in the publicity of print until nearly quarter of a century after her death.

This story is included in another list of dramatic poets, that which was printed with Thomas Whincop's posthumously published *Scanderbeg* in 1747, and is generally associated with his name though it is not certain that he was the compiler of it. The romantic Whincop story may be quoted at length. It runs as follows:

This gentlewoman was the daughter of one Mr. Freeman, of Holbeach, in Lincolnshire; and if we may give credit to some private stories concerning her, she had for a short time a kind of University Education; for her own mother, who was a gentlewoman of a good family, dying when she was a child, and her father marrying again, she was so ill-treated by her mother-in-law, when her father was dead also, that she determined to come to London, with very little money in her purse, and almost destitute of every necessary of life, to seek a better fortune than she was likely to obtain at home under a cruel step-dame.

She had not travelled many miles, but fatigued by her journey and filled with a thousand perplexing thoughts, she sat her down, with tears in her eyes, on a bank by the side of the road, bewailing her lamentable condition, when a young gentleman from the University of Cambridge [Anthony Hammond, Esq.*], afterwards well known in the polite and literary world, chancing to come that way, could not but take notice of our weeping damsel, then in the bloom of youth and beauty, not quite fifteen years of age, her charms not diminished but rather heightened by her tears: having inquired into the cause of her distress, he was so much moved with her story, and the simple and affecting manner in which she related it, and more especially with her lovely shape and features, that he found

* This was the "silver-tongued Hammond" of Bolingbroke; the man of whom Chesterfield wrote that he had "all the senses but common sense," and of whom a friend wrote "he was a well-bred man, had but a small portion of solid understanding, and was a great flatterer. He was a pleasant story-teller and seldom sad." All of which helps to give plausibility to the romantic story.

himself so attached to her person and interest, that he could not think of parting with her, and of suffering her to continue her painful journey in the condition she was in; he therefore entreated her to put herself under his protection, which after some modest but faint reluctance she consented to. He carried her to a village not far from the University, where providing her with a suit of boy's clothes, he afterwards introduced her privately into the College, and his intimates were told she was a relation, whom he called by the name of Cousin Jack, who was come to see him and the University, and pass a few days there.

Jack was a smart little fellow, learnt to fence, and because the young rogue had a mind to be a man before his time, when the barber shaved his cousin, he must perform his office likewise on him; not that Jack had a beard, but he wanted one. And that he might go away from College with a little more learning than he brought thither, which is more than everyone can say, his cousin took a good deal of pains to teach him a little grammar. He instructed him also in some of the terms of logic, rhetoric, and ethics. As to metaphysics, as Hudibras has it, he

> Learnt what's what, and that's as high
> As metaphysic wit can fly.

Jack, mightily pleased with his cousin, and his cousin with him, they passed some months very agreeably together; but whether their affair began to be smoked in the College, or the squire made that a pretence only to get rid of a companion he had had long enough to grow weary of, he told Jack one morning that he was afraid they were watched a little more narrowly than he had imagined, and that therefore for both their reputations, he must think of leaving the University, but it should be for his advantage; that he should go back to the village where he had put on his breeches, and resume the sex he laid aside; that he would buy some things necessary, and send him to London, where he would recommend him to a

person, who should take care of him till he could follow, which should be with all the speed that his affairs would allow of, and that he need not doubt but he would post after with the wings of love: though in the meantime, he should half break his heart for the loss of his company.

The young lady, for she's Jack no longer, had no right to dispute his commands, but consented to obey them, though with a heavy heart; but her misfortune was somewhat alleviated by the hopes of seeing London, and by a very handsome present he made her in gold, and a letter of recommendation he gave her to a gentlewoman of his acquaintance, to treat her as the daughter of a deceased gentleman, his friend. Their sighs and tears at parting, their tender sentiments of love and grief, I leave to the reader's imagination; and indeed they are better to be conceived than expressed.

Miss being arrived at London, pretty tolerably equipped, with some money in her pocket, and having the assistance of an obliging good-natured woman, who was willing to show her all the diversions of the town, made her every day less and less regret the loss of her University friend; and indeed she saw him not in many years after. Affairs of a public nature called his thoughts another way, being soon after chosen member of Parliament for the University of Cambridge; after that, representative in Parliament for the county of Huntingdon, made one of the Commissioners of the Navy, and next appointed Paymaster of the forces of Spain. These things happened in the course of several years, but in all the time she could never hear that he had made the least inquiry after her.

The young lady, in the meantime, did not languish for an absent lover. From her first coming to London, she took care to improve both the charms of her person and her genius; she learnt French, and read a great deal of poetry especially, but studied men as well as books.

The playhouse was the meridian she chose to shine in, and it was impossible for her to appear often there without

being taken notice of and drawing many admirers after her; but one Mr. Fox, a nephew of the late Sir Stephen Fox, was the person who bore her off in triumph from a cloud of rivals. To this gentleman she was married, or something like it, in the sixteenth year of her age; but, whether by death, or whatever accident it happened, they lived not together above one year. He was succeeded in her affections by one Mr. Carrol, a young gentleman in the army, who had the misfortune to be killed in a duel, about a year and a half after his marriage. This was a sensible affliction to her. To divert her melancholy, and partly perhaps for a support, she now almost entirely devoted herself to the Muses, and it was under this name of Carrol that some of her first plays were published.

IV

If the story which we have just quoted be true as to its earlier part,* then that set forth by Giles Jacob must be wrong in various details, for according to him Susanna was but a child of three when her father died. It is probable that the dramatist herself supplied the data from which Jacob wrote, and it is not impossible that *if* there had been such an escapade as that at Cambridge she might have given him vague dates that would have made the recalling of it unlikely. We are, however, inclined to think the Anthony Hammond episode an invention of some scandalmonger of the period, or an embroidering of some deviser of those "private stories" to which Whincop relates it. The whole exploit reads somewhat like an episode from some play of the period—the dramatists were very fond of making occasion to mask their heroines in male attire—or from some novel such as those of the *Tom and Jerry* period of the early 19th century.

As we are explicitly told by Whincop that Anthony Hammond did not follow his quondam "cousin" to town

* In the annotation to Elwin and Courthope's edition of Pope's Works it is accepted as part of Susanna's veritable biography.

to " renew their amorous intercourse," it is difficult to avoid surmising that the " gentlewoman " to whom she was supposed to have been recommended may have been intended to indicate such an one as plays the part of procuress in one of Aphra Behn's novels.

Our discrepant biographers agree in saying that at the age of fifteen or sixteen Susanna was married to an elusive " nephew of Sir Stephen Fox," but doubts have been cast on the union having been a legal one; Whincop certainly points to an irregular union, and the later *Biographia Dramatica* says that that gentleman did " not live with her above a twelvemonth," implying that the tie between them had not the sanction of the law. Sir Stephen Fox was a man of considerable importance in his day—incidentally, he was the originator of that Chelsea Hospital with which tradition insists on crediting Mistress Eleanor Gwyn—but unfortunately we cannot follow the fortunes of his brothers and sisters and so trace the nephew said to have been associated with Susanna; a suggestion that Anthony Hammond may have been that " nephew " and the " marriage " thus synchronise with the romantic if not precisely proper escapade at Cambridge, does not bear examination.

V

On the disappearance of the " nephew of Sir Stephen Fox " from the scene, it is recorded that Susanna's " wit and beauty soon procured her a second husband, whose name was Carroll and who was an officer in the army." Here again Joseph Knight, in writing the memoir in the *D.N.B.*, expresses doubt as to the union being a legal marriage but gives no reason for that view: " A connection lasting a year and a half, and rightly or wrongly styled a marriage, subsequently existed between her and an officer named Carroll." Who wrote loose comedies must themselves have been loose seems the logic of many later writers on these women pioneers with the pen and where there is

not even a contemporary hint of scandal they devise or hint at such posthumously.

In the matter of Susanna's marriage to Captain Carroll, even without our new discovery, there was the fairly good evidence that for some years it was under this name that she wrote. In this case, by the way, the reference in Giles Jacob's memoir is curiously put—"and survived him likewise, in the space of a year and a half." The meaning seems to be that, after they had been a year and a half married, Carroll died and Susanna survived, but the implication also is that the earlier union had been terminated by the death of Fox. It is generally said that Captain Carroll died as the result of a duel, though as far as we can find the earliest record of his having done so only dates from 1747.

Thanks to evidence discovered in a seemingly unlikely place, the Journal of the House of Lords, we are able to state definitely—despite the innuendo of the *D.N.B.*—that Susanna *was* married to Carroll—to give a few particulars of the husband, and to say that they had a son, of whose existence there has hitherto been no mention. Susanna's husband was (Captain) William Carroll, son of Major Charles Carroll and Anne, the only daughter of Thomas O'Meara (presumably of co. Tipperary). From the case of Caroll v. Otway, which led to an appeal to the House of Lords on January 29, 1707,* we learn that O'Meara had also an only son who "lived a dissolute life" and had been disinherited by his father who in 1685 had by a conveyance transferred the title to certain lands to Charles Caroll and his heirs, and further devised them to the same purpose by his will made at the same time. Two years later he died. After the Siege of Limerick in 1691, it appears that much of the land "like most of the lands in that part of the kingdom," lay waste, and the disinherited William O'Meara entered upon them and took steps to let them to one Otway. Charles Carroll was evidently then dead and his son William in 1698 brought an action of "ejectment

* *House of Lords Manuscripts* (New Series). Vol. vii. p. 21.

for the recovery of the said lands in the Court of Regalities of the county of Tipperary." William Carroll was presumably by then already the husband of Susanna. In 1699 it was agreed to refer the matter to the decision of a single arbitrator, but when the award was given Otway refused to accept it, and went on with Chancery proceedings, during which Susanna's husband died. The case was not heard until October, 1706, when it was referred to a jury of the county to decide whether Thomas O'Meara was *compos mentis* when he made the disposal of his property in 1685! The petition and appeal to the House of Lords was made to have that decision reversed, as it had never before been suggested that Thomas O'Meara was not *compos mentis*.

There appear to have been no other proceedings in the matter beyond the presentation of the appeal, the main interest from our point of view being that it was the "petition and appeal of William Caroll, a minor, by his guardian Anthony Caroll, and his mother, Susanna Caroll." Though the name is spelt "Caroll" in this record, we have preferred, except in quoted passages, to use the form which Susanna used on her published work.

Whether the law case ever came to an end cannot be said. It is possible that the boy William did not live, for we have no further mention of him, and in that case the matter of the Tipperary lands could have had no further interest for his mother. When her husband died it presumably became necessary for Susanna to do something in the way of earning a livelihood for herself and her infant. As one writer puts it, "partly perhaps to divert her melancholy, but chiefly it is probable for the sake of a support, she now applied to her pen, and became votary to the Muses, and it is under this name of Carroll that some of her earlier pieces were published." That statement is certainly true of her first plays,* but there is no evidence of her having

* In the B.M. Catalogue, though she is known to fame as Mrs. Centlivre, all her works are entered under "Carroll afterwards Centlivre."

published any other work either in prose or verse under this name. If there were any tentative work "for the booksellers" it must have appeared anonymously. Later on we know that she was for some time an actress, and it may be suggested that it was as an actress that she first came to be associated with the theatre, and that from experience as such she may have learned something of that mastery of the art of presenting her materials which is one of the most notable features of her dramatic work. It is true that the *Biographia Dramatica* in referring to her acting says "such an attachment she seems to have had to the theatre, that she even became herself a performer, though it is probable of no great merit, as she never rose above the station of a country actress," and also adds that she was not long in this way of life.

It would appear not unlikely that Susanna Carroll's connection with the theatre began as an actress. Indeed, it would be more probable that she should have learned as a performer something of the art of stage craft, than that she should have turned actress after having scored three or four not inconsiderable successes as dramatic writer. That her name has not been noted in the cast of any play at one of the London theatres is by no means conclusive, for when we do find it recorded that she was acting it was as member of a country or touring company. We find her now at Bath and then at Windsor, and the vague statement is made that she performed in various parts of the country.

VI

That some sections of the theatre-going public of the latter part of the 17th century resented having put before them plays that were the work of a "female pen" Aphra Behn made sufficiently plain more than once; yet it is worthy of note that the pioneers, Aphra and her immediate successors, appear to have had very little difficulty in getting their early essays at play-writing produced. Mary Manley, as we have seen, was a young woman of but about twenty-

four when, as she tells us, the rival theatres were competing for the privilege of staging her first pieces, and Susanna Carroll was still in her early twenties when her first play—written it is said in the twentieth year of her age—was accepted and produced at Drury Lane. For few present-day dramatic aspirants is the way made so easy.

It was on some unascertained date in 1700 that Susanna Carroll had the satisfaction of seeing her tragedy, *The Perjured Husband; or, The Adventures of Venice,* put on the stage, and the disappointment of seeing it fall short of success. When issuing the printed play—dedicated with fulsome formality to the Duke of Bedford—the author prefaced it with a brief defence of certain coarsenesses of expression as being necessary to the proper presentation of the characters who uttered them. She concluded the preface by saying that the play "went off with general applause; and it is the opinion of some of our best judges, that it only wanted the addition of good actors, and a full town, to have brought me a sixth night, there having been worse plays, within this twelve-month, approved of."

That tragedy was not Susanna's medium was evident; *The Perjured Husband,* written partly in prose and partly in very poor blank verse, presents a somewhat ridiculous romance of a young husband unable to tear himself away from a lovely lady other than his wife. The whole is somewhat coarse comedy until the final scene when we get a sudden tragic concentration—the wife (disguised as a young man) kills her rival; the husband by mistake kills the wife, and the lover of the rival kills the husband. The setting is that of Venice in Carnival time and it is impossible to avoid comparing the play with Aphra Behn's *Rover,* of twenty-three years earlier, which is founded on the same theme—the lascivious license supposedly permitted to women at the time of the Carnival at Venice. The earlier piece has less of restraint in the presentation of that license, but immeasurably more spirit than the later one.

Despite the supposed way in which plays by women were

regarded as something inferior, there was no more attempt to disguise feminine authorship in the case of Susanna than there had been in the case of Aphra. If the plays were produced sometimes anonymously, the femininity of the author was often plainly indicated in the prologue; it was so in Susanna's tragedy and it was so in the first of her comedies which followed in 1702. This, *The Beau's Duel: or, a Soldier for the Ladies** was produced at the New Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and is on one of the stock themes of the playwrights of the period—that of a girl who is expected to abandon a lover and wed a wealthy wooer in obedience to the wishes of her father. In this case the wealthy one is a moneyed fop, a ridiculous attitudiniser, and to a farcical duel between him and a good comic character, Ogle, who fancies everybody is in love with him, the play owes its title. The duel takes place in Hyde Park and the principals are kicked off the field by two girls, disguised as young men. "Another-guess man than your father designs for you," is a remark that seems curiously suggestive of modern slang. Another matter that might puzzle an annotator is that in the droll duel in Hyde Park the combatants are said to be armed with "files"! The word is used repeatedly, and we might even have thought the duel fought with those strange tools had not the second edition of the play been decorated with a frontispiece in which the combatants are fighting with fencing *foils*—files being evidently the mincing pronunciation of the day. Another feature of this illustration is that the two ladies who interrupted the duel disguised as young men wore

* Jacob and the *Biographia Dramatica* date this 1703, and Ward 1704, but a copy of the play in the B.M is dated 1702, showing it to have been Mrs. Centlivre's first comedy. When printed *The Beau's Duel* was dedicated "To Samuel Brown, Esq., of Stocking Hall, in Rutland," who is described as "a great encourager and principal ornament of all polite literature and gentle accomplishments." His "most obedient and most humble servant, Susanna Carroll" says that it is her highest ambition to find a place among his friends, but nothing now appears to be discoverable about him. He *may* be the Samuel Brown who was a surgeon at Madras at the end of the 17th century and sent home botanical collections that are still preserved *(D.N.B.)*.

gentlemanly hats, wigs, and coats *over full and deeply-flounced skirts*—a "disguise" that could not have misled anyone!

Of the reception of this play we have no record. Baker describes it as one of the most indifferent of its author's pieces, it has however ample matter for entertainment if interpreted by efficient actors, and that it met with some measure of success may be gathered from the fact that its author was busy with another comedy for the same stage during the same year.

The new play, which was produced at the Lincoln's Inn theatre on December 31, 1702, was *The Stolen Heiress; or the Salamanca Doctor Outwitted,* and was but an alteration from Thomas May's comedy *The Heir* (1620). It is partly in prose, and partly in blank verse of almost unbelievable blankness. When this play was published (without any author's name) in the following year it was dedicated "to the Hon. Sir Stafford Fairborn, Rear-Admiral of the White," and Susanna neatly turned the old conceit of poets giving eternal life to great exploits by saying "I am proud to be the first that in this kind has laid an offering at your feet, thereby showing our greatest wits a subject worthy their sublimest thoughts, for though the poet makes the verse, 'tis the hero makes the poet."

In the following year Susanna Carroll had another play at Drury Lane, a piece however which was little more than a rendering into English of Molière's *Le Medecin Malgré lui;* indeed that was used as a sub-title to *Love's Contrivance,* in printing which the author wrote an ingenuous preface, signed "R.M.", in which she said:

"Some scenes I confess are partly taken from Molière, and I dare be bold to say it has not suffered in the translation: I thought 'em pretty in the French, and could not help believing they might divert in an English dress. The French have that light airiness in their temper, that the least glimpse of wit sets them a-laughing, when 'twould

not make us so much as smile; so that when I found the style too poor, I endeavoured to give it a turn; for whoever borrows from them must take care to touch the colours with an English pencil, and form the piece according to our manners. When first I took those scenes of Molière's, I designed but three acts; for that reason I chose such as suited best with farce, which indeed are all of that sort you'll find in it; for what I added to 'em, I believe my reader will allow to be of a different style, at least some very good judges thought so, and in spite of me divided into five acts, believing it might pass among the comedies of these times. And indeed I have no reason to complain, for I confess it met a reception beyond my expectation."

Before indulging in that naïvely complacent confession concerning the way in which she had improved Molière, Susanna explained why it was that, while thinking the classic unities of time, place and action the greatest beauties of a dramatic poem, she preferred to adhere to the "innovation of wit and humour." She also explicitly refers to this play, which is written throughout in prose, as a poem: "the following poem I think has nothing that can disoblige the nicest ear; and though I did not observe the rules of drama, I took peculiar care to dress my thoughts in such a modest style, that I might not give offence to any."

The dedication of the play to the Earl of Dorset suggests that she had earlier addressed a poem or other work to him for she refers to "the courteous affability with which your Lordship once received a trifle from my hands," but the "trifle" has not been traced. The reason why this play appeared as by "R.M." is explained by the author later.

There seems to have been a gap of a year or two after the production of *Love's Contrivance* before Susanna succeeded in getting another play put on, this time at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre. This was *The Gamester* (1705), which is not to be confused with either the earlier play by James Shirley, or the later one by Edward Moore,

with the same title, and is now chiefly of interest as a comedy of the manners of the time. The piece is mainly an adaptation from a French original* and owes to that original the incident, on which the romance turns; that of a gambler staking his ladylove's portrait to a stranger—who proves to be that ladylove disguised as a young man; which is curiously regarded as no breaking of his pledge never to part with the picture except to her! It is quite a good comedy, when we have once allowed for the "tone" of the time, and can believe in the reform of the fool who is the hero of the story. There seems a good deal of potential humour in the characterisation, needing to be brought out by the actors, and one gaming-table scene which appears to be a bit of vigorously effective realism. There is curiously little of wit or humour in the dialogue to give it lasting value, but its dramatic quality kept it in the list of acting plays well through the century.

When *The Gamester* was printed it was issued without any author's name (whereby hangs a tale to be learned later) and the dedicatory epistle to the Earl of Huntingdon —"the actions of your life file the teeth of satire, as much as others give 'em an edge"—remained unsigned. In that dedication the author made an early claim to be considered as a playwright with a purpose: "The design of this piece were (*sic*) to divert, without that vicious strain which usually attends the comic muse, and according to the first intent of plays, recommend morality, and I hope I have in some measure performed it; I dare affirm there is nothing immodest or immoral in it; part of it I own myself obliged to the French for, particularly the character of the Gamester; but he is entirely ruined in French: whereas I in complaisance to the many fine gentlemen that play in England have reclaimed him." The immediate success of *The Gamester* appears to have been such as to induce its

* J. F. Regnard's *Le Joueur* (1696), not as Baker says Destouche's *Le Dissipateur*, which was not written until thirty years after Mrs. Centlivre's death, and was, in fact, based on her *Gamester*.

author to follow it up with another comedy of gambling and on November 20 of the same year (1705) *The Basset Table* was produced at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. This was another comedy of contemporary manners—for the game of basset had only been introduced from France about thirty years before—with little or no plot, and another realistic gambling scene. There are also a couple of fresh comedy characters in a young woman given to the study of natural science,—" a F.R.S. in petticoats, but with feelings to spare for a lover as well as for a *lumbricus laeta*," as Ward puts it—and a drugster's wife given to wasting her husband's substance that she may snob it with the titled lady who keeps the basset table; though Mrs. Sago and her husband border on farce with their " little language " of endearment. Each of these gambling plays may be said to have a moral, though the author is kind in that in each the leading gambler is finally left a reformed character.

In dedicating the play when published*—" by Mrs. Susan. Cent Livre "—to Lord Altham, the author again emphasised her purpose and preened herself on her propriety. She said " I heartily wish this play were more worthy of your Lordship's acceptance: yet—so much I hope will be forgiven the fondness of a mother for her production; if I say in its favour, that through the whole piece I have had a tender regard to good manners, and by the main drift of it, endeavoured to ridicule and correct one of the most reigning vices of the age. I might say as many of the brethren have done upon slighter grounds that this play had had the good fortune to please and divert the nicest and politest part of the town; but I should set little stress on their applause had I not some reason to depend upon your Lordship's approbation, whose judgment, penetration and discernment are alone sufficient to do full justice to a performance of this kind."

* Only a copy of the 2nd edition has been available for reference and that was evidently printed after Susanna's marriage.

VII

According to the accepted story of Susanna's life, with her next play we are supposed to reach what may be regarded as the turning point of her career. This next play was a comedy entitled *Love at a Venture,* and on its being offered to the management of Drury Lane the author had the chagrin of having it declined. Why it was declined it is impossible to say. It had the great recommendation of having been based on a French original (*Le Galant Double,* of Corneille), and it certainly has some very effective comedy scenes owing to the complications consequent upon a young man wooing two ladies under different aliases while pledged (by his father) to one whom he believes to be a third—but who turns out to be that one of the others with whom he is really in love.

Susanna Carroll had already had six plays produced, not unsuccessfully, at the London theatres and may well have felt hurt at the refusal of *Love at a Venture.* It is said that it was on this refusal that she resolved to turn actress, and that in this play she made her first essay. If that were so she must have joined the company known as the Duke of Grafton's Servants—for it was by that company, as the copy printed the same year (and dedicated to the Duke of Beaufort) tells us, that the comedy was first performed at the New Theatre at Bath in 1706. Unfortunately we have not the cast so that it is not possible to say which part was enacted by the author herself, but from the Prologue we do get a suggestion that the taking of the play to Bath was done at the author's own risk:

"Lest any here should blame our author's toil,
For strolling with her brat a hundred mile,
By me to such, she does this reason give,
Seeing how many men by ventures live,
She straight embarked, and hoisted sail to try,
What pure good nature in the bottoms lie. . . .

Since every man adventures in his way,
Hither our author ventured with her play;
And hopes her profits will her charge defray,
If that bright circle ventures to adorn her day."

"That bright circle" was presumably the first night audience, and "her day" would be the third night of the play, the proceeds of which were then customarily the author's reward. If a piece did not reach a third night the author presumably got nothing. The Epilogue, which is said to have been "spoken by Miss Jacobella Power," is so worded as to suggest the possibility of that being the name under which the author acted:

"In spite of dull insipid rules, I'm come
To learn what fate attends my virgin bloom.
Strange things I've heard this night, that make me fear,
Lest I should find such entertainment here.
You men are grown so witty in deceit,
That we, poor girls, are often ruined by't.
'Tis pity—but I hope to cross this play,
And be revenged on you some other way.
Well—but consider, we are tender things,
That innocence and spritely beauty brings.
Soft accents, broken words and yielding air,
Are all the weapons that attend the fair.
And can you long resist the sweet temptation
Give us at least a Bill of Reformation;
That the succeeding age may say of you,
You dare be civil, though you can't be true.
But if at last no charms have Power to win ye,
You're past repentance—or the devil's in ye."
[*Runs off.*

How the Duke of Grafton's Servants acquitted themselves, and how the good people of Bath received the play,

are alike unrecorded; but we have to assume that Susanna Carroll was now one of that company of strolling players, though if she first joined it for the production of her comedy at Bath she cannot have remained in it for many months.

Later in the same year, the company was performing at Windsor, where Queen Anne was then in residence with her Court. One of the plays presented was *The Rival Queens* of Nathaniel Lee, and in this Susanna took the part of Alexander the Great! In the audience on this occasion was one Mr. Joseph Centlivre, who occupied the position of Yeoman of the Mouth in Her Majesty's household, or in less grandiose language was one of the Queen's cooks. The actress so "wounded the heart" of Joseph Centlivre, according to one of the summary accounts, that they were soon after married, and Susanna's brief experience as a strolling player came to an end. Of her husband we know but little;* that he was French, either by birth or descent, is certain, and all that is recorded of him is that after Queen Anne's death he remained as principal cook with her successor, and that in London he had a house in Buckingham Court, Spring Gardens—the first definite home with which we can associate our heroine, and one that remained her home for the rest of her life.

That life, indeed, is for the most part, so far as any details are now recoverable, chiefly represented by the production of her works. Either shortly after or immediately before her marriage she had a new comedy, *The Platonic Lady,* brought out at the Queen's House in the Haymarket, a comedy which is described as not being one of her best, but which might by some be thought to be the worst in that it has the distasteful feature that one of the two ladies whom the amorous hero is pursuing proves to be his own sister.

* He was possibly a son or other relation of Henry Centlivre, whose name was added Jan. 27, 1705-6, to a Bill then before Parliament for the Naturalisation of a number of people—when the Bill received the Royal Assent in the following March it naturalised 195 persons.

When *The Platonic Lady* was published, the author, breaking away from the custom of dedicating her work to a nobleman from whom an acknowledgment in the form of guineas was to be anticipated, made her dedication the occasion of a protest against the fashion of decrying plays merely on account of the sex of the playwright. As this dedication not only breaks away from custom in that respect but also affords some personal matters, it may be quoted almost fully. Addressed "To all the generous encouragers of female ingenuity," it runs as follows:

"Gentlemen and Ladies: My muse chose to make this universal address, hoping, among the numerous crowd, to find some souls great enough to protect her against the carping malice of the vulgar world; who think it a proof of their sense, to dislike everything that is writ by women. I was the more induced to this general application, from the usage I have met on all sides.

"A play secretly introduced to the House, whilst the author remains unknown, is approved by everybody: The actors cry it up, and are in expectation of a great run; the bookseller of a second edition, and the scribbler of a sixth night: But if by chance the plot's discovered, and the brat found fatherless, immediately it flags in the opinion of those that extolled it before, and the bookseller falls in his price, with this reason only, *It is a woman's.* Thus they alter their judgment, by the esteem they have for the author, though the play is still the same. They ne'er reflect, that we have had some male-productions of this kind, void of plot and wit, and full as insipid as ever a woman's of us all.

"I can't forbear inserting a story which my bookseller, that printed my *Gamester,* told me, of a spark that had seen my *Gamester* three or four times, and liked it extremely: Having bought one of the books, asked who the author was; and being told, a woman, threw down the book, and put up his money, saying, he had spent too much

after it already, and was sure if the Town had known that, it would never have run ten days. No doubt this was a wit in his own eyes. It is such as these that rob us of that which inspires the poet, praise. And it is such as these that made him that printed my comedy called *Love's Contrivance; or, Medecin Malgré lui,* put two letters of a wrong name to it; which though it was the height of injustice to me, yet his imposing on the Town turned to account with him; and thus passing for a man's, it has been played at least a hundred times.

"And why this wrath against the women's works? Perhaps you'll answer, because they meddle with things out of their sphere: But I say, no; for since the poet is born, why not a woman as well as a man? Not that I would derogate from those great men who have a genius, and learning to improve that genius: I only object against those ill-natured critics, who wanting both, think they have sufficient claim to sense, by railing at what they don't understand. Some have armed themselves with resolution not to like the play they paid to see; and if in spite of spleen they have been pleased against their will, have maliciously reported it was none of mine, but given me by some gentleman: Nay, even my own sex, which should assert our prerogative against such detractors, are often backward to encourage a female pen. . . . What cannot England boast from women? The mighty Roman felt the power of Boadicea's arm; Eliza made Spain tremble; but ANN, the greatest of the three, has shook the man that aimed at universal sway. After naming this miracle, the Glory of our Sex, sure none will spitefully cavil at the following scenes, purely because a woman writ 'em. This I dare venture to say in their behalf, there is a plot and story in them, I hope will entertain the reader; which is the utmost ambition of, Gentlemen and Ladies, your most obedient humble servant."

There is no name appended, despite the frank avowal of feminine authorship, and the title page of the play

describes it as "by the author of *The Gamester* and *Love's Contrivance.*"

VIII

There was a gap of two and a half years, November 1706 to May 1709, between *The Platonic Lady* and Mrs. Centlivre's next play. At about the later time was published a work discussed at some length in the preceding chapter, Mrs. Manley's *Secret Memoirs from the New Atalantis,* which must be recalled here owing to a slander in it with which those who keyed the queer medley later associated the name of Mrs. Centlivre. It occurs in the account of fashionable folks driving in the Prado [Hyde Park]. Virtue inquires of Intelligence: "Who is that alone in yonder chariot? his equipage is handsome, but his person needs no setting off: he appears much a gentleman [Sir Richard Temple]; his eyes are continually on the next coach, which is adorned with a wonderful gay lady [Mrs. Centlivre]. She either sings well, or fancies she does, for I've observed, that still as she came round, she was humming an air; he seems to steal his glances, and be upon the reserve."

To this Intelligence responds: "I must take leave to answer your mightiness without power, by a leer and a malicious smile, because I am infinitely pleased at your query, it borders so much upon my beloved diversion, scandal; and lets me into a very ample theme. 'Tis the Chevalier Bellair, of an ancient family, and a considerable estate; yet fond of honour, he has listed himself under Bellona, and most part of the year exposes himself (that fine person of his) to the fatigues of the campaign, the rest of his time he devotes wholly to the lady you see in that coach. At first he was as happy as Love and Opportunity, with the help of the favourite mantua-maker (for those people are now mightily the fashion), could make him; but the lady sooner grew inconsistent, and has left him to wait whole days together at the Chocolate-house, in expectation of the

happy moment for her calling of him, according to her promise; whilst she, drowned in the looser revels of wine, and new love, forgets that he is upon duty, impatient, and fretting at her delay. One of his rivals is a person of poetical dignity, he first made her a Muse, and she in return made him a fortune, his bounty was imaginary, hers substantial. A beautiful youth of quality, whom I have already shown you in the Prado, may be called another; but still the Chevalier is the standing dish, and may very well go down when in the country, where her husband is going to confine her; their villas are not far distant from each other. Her Lord [Lord Railton] has what he wanted, an heir, to deprive the next successor, whom he mortally hates, and thinks it high time, by banishment, to put an end to her public indiscretions."

It is true when *The New Atalantis* was published in 1709 the names which we have added in brackets did not appear, they being added in a later "keyed" issue of Mrs. Manley's wonderful medley of scandal. Seeing that that work made a special feature of stories concerning the Whigs, it would have been remarkable if Mrs. Manley had left Mrs. Centlivre unattended to. Yet there is something obviously wrong in the passage quoted: if the lady in the coach who was ogled by the Chevalier Bellair (or Sir Richard Temple) was really intended to represent Susanna, it could not at the same time represent Lady Railton, of whom we know nothing.

The lady in the coach is said to have been a lady of many lovers—and, despite the varied matrimonial excursions of Susanna's early years, apart from this footnote use of her name in *The New Atalantis* we have no whisper of scandal concerning her after she became the wife of Joseph Centlivre. It is, therefore, probable that the putting of her name against the passage in the keyed edition of Mrs. Manley's work was done more or less at random, in a manner quite in keeping with the probable fashion in which much of that work was originally designed. That

Susanna Centlivre's frankly avowed Whiggism made her the subject of slander we may gather from her own words, though unfortunately we have nothing more than her own words to indicate in what way it was that she suffered for her political views.

IX

On May 12, 1709, Susanna Centlivre was once more represented at Drury Lane, this time with a comedy entitled *The Busy-Body,* a comedy the story of which is a variant of that in which the heroine is wooed by a young lover and an old one. The action is so well devised and some of the characters are so well presented that the indifferent dialogue appears to have been overlooked, and the play not only went to a thirteenth night, which was then a sign of considerable success, but was revived many times and continued to hold so prominent a position in the acting drama that at least fourteen editions of it were printed during the 18th century. This success was probably in no small degree due to the fact that the play included what was then something of a new character on the stage. This was the busybody himself, Marplot, "a sort of silly fellow, cowardly, but very inquisitive to know everybody's business, generally spoils all he undertakes, yet without design." He may, indeed, be looked upon as founder of a stage family the most celebrated member of which was to be called into being more than a century later as Paul Pry.

The heroine while loved by, and loving, a dashing young knight, pretends to listen to the advances of her foolish old guardian who seeks possession of her person that he may not have to yield up her fortune; but he is of course outwitted in the end by the young people. So also in the underplot the second foolish old gentleman—a great admirer of Spanish customs, who seeks to marry his daughter to an unknown Spanish merchant—is duped into marrying her to the right man masquerading as the

Don. In each case the well-meaning but stupid bungler, Marplot, in seeking to aid the lovers, nearly spoils their plans, and so heightens the entertainment for the spectator.

It has not, unfortunately, been possible to consult a first edition of this play to see if it included any prefatorial matter other than the dedication, the earliest issue in the British Museum being the fifth edition (1732). The dedication is to Lord Somers, the distinguished leader of the Whigs, who had lately been appointed Lord President of the Privy Council, whom the author addressed in a variation of the usual fulsome terms, though her inferiority complex made her declare herself "conscious of the inequality of a female pen to so masculine an attempt."

Before the close of 1709 Susanna had another play in readiness and this was produced at the Haymarket theatre on December 12. Of its fortunes we learn something from the preface which she contributed when it was printed early in the following year. The play was *The Man's Bewitched; or, The Devil to do about Her,* and an ill-service seems to have been done to it by an abuse of the puff-preliminary in a paper called *The Female Tatler.* It would seem that the writer, in injudicious flattery if a friend, or in derision if an enemy, had so lauded the piece and so acclaimed the writer as a supporter of the stage that people were moved to prejudice against it. Then, to make matters worse, it was falsely given out that the writer of that notice was Susanna herself! Further, when it was produced, there was the rival attraction of an opera, and it was within a fortnight of Christmas, while by way of still further handicap the theatre prices were raised for the first night. Yet, says the author, it "brought forty pounds the second night, which showed it had some merit; for I have known a play kept up, that failed of half that money the second night. Now, by the rules of the House, it ought to have been played on: But who can secure the life of a play, when that of a man is often sacrificed to the malice of Parties? This play met with a kind reception in general, and not-

withstanding the disadvantages it had to struggle with, by raising the prices the first day, and the nearness of Christmas, it would have made its way to a sixth night, if it had had fair play. Mistake me not, I do not mean from the representation; for I must do the players reason: had I searched all the theatres in the world, I could not have selected a better company, nor had more justice done me in the action, though they have not dealt honourably by me in my bargain; for they ought not to have stopped the run, upon any pique whatever. 'Tis small encouragement to write for the stage, when the actors, according to the caprice of their humours, maugre the taste of the town, have power to sink the reputation of a play; for if they resolve not to act it, the Town can't support it."

It was early in 1710 that *The Man's Bewitched* was published with this explanation of its failure to take the town, but what the particular "pique" may have been to which its prompt stoppage was attributable we cannot find. In its dedication to the Duke of Devonshire, then Lord Steward of Queen Anne's Household, Susanna indulged in her not infrequent apology for being a mere woman, "to attempt your Grace's character is the superior business of a masculine pen, and not to be reached by mine," and also in a rare reference to the position occupied by Joseph Centlivre, "since my husband has the honour to serve Her Majesty under the command of your Grace, as he did the late King of glorious memory under that of your father, I could not be prevailed upon to alter my resolution of prefixing your Grace's name in the front of this poem, at once to show my gratitude and my ambition." This was signed Susanna Cent-Livre, a form not infrequently appearing on her work, sometimes with and sometimes without the hyphen.

Before leaving this play it must be said that a ridiculous scene in which Laura pretends to be mad and then the "devil" in her is transferred to her lover by a quick-witted servant, for the purpose of taking in the old dotard her

guardian—the very centre of the play as it might be considered—may be thought to pass the bounds of comedy. This might of itself have made the public cry down the piece, if it were not that audiences of that day were accustomed to having fathers and guardians of young girls of scarce marriageable age put before them as toothless old dotards!

There is one scene in *The Man's Bewitched* that might well have suggested a famous scene in Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer;* though so far as we have found the parallel has not hitherto been noted. It is that in which Faithful, on being discovered in Sir David Watchum's house, where his ward Laura is virtually a prisoner, suddenly pretends to mistake it for an inn, and storms over the lack of attention to his wants.

Faithful. Sir, I take this for an extraordinary inn—pray do me the favour to sit—I'll beat the chamber down, but I'll make somebody come up. So, ho, the house here——

[*Stamps.*

Sir David. A plague split you, what do you make all this noise for? Oh, oh.

Laura. Pray, Sir David, humour the gentleman, for I fancy he is a little beside himself.

Sir David. Humour the devil! Hell and furies! This must be some rogue—Here, where are you, rascals?

Enter Servants.

Faithful. Ay, scoundrels, where are you? Ye dogs, what is the reason we can have no attendance? (*Strikes one of them.*) Fetch us a bottle of claret, sirrah, and bring us word what we can have to eat——

Sir David. Bring a bottle of claret! bring a halter—— What do you strike my servants for? ha, sir.

Faithful. Your servants, sir! They are my servants as long as I pay for what I call for—— Ho! I find you are the landlord of this well-governed inn. Make your people

more tractable, do you hear, sir? Or I shall not only beat them but you too—death, ye villains, why don't you stir?

[*Strikes another.*

Here, it was a sudden improvisation on the part of Faithful to make believe that he had mistaken the irascible old knight's house for an inn, whereas in Goldsmith's rich comedy Marlow and Hastings are the victims of a practical joke on the part of Tony Lumpkin. Although Goldsmith is said to have based his "mistake" on a blunder of the kind that he had himself made, it is difficult to avoid believing that he had read Mrs. Centlivre's play.

x

Susanna Centlivre next appeared on the stage with a one-act farce with the strange title of *A Bickerstaff's Burying; or, Work for the Upholders.* This, the only example of her farces that reached the stage, was produced at Drury Lane on March 27, 1710. The question of its title does not appear to have been earlier raised, yet certainly calls for consideration. Something less than a year before Sir Richard Steele had set up as the humorous censor of the age and started a long-lasting literary fashion with that thrice-weekly miscellany of comment on men, women and manners, *The Tatler*; and the name under which he sought as he said to "convince and instruct" people was that of Isaac Bickerstaff. Now in the number of *The Tatler* for Saturday, November 19, 1709, Steele enlarged upon the proposition that "every worthless man is a dead man," and in the number for the following Saturday gave what purported to be a letter from the company of upholders [since come to be known as undertakers] protesting against the reluctance shown by the many "dead" people whom Bickerstaff had indicated to come and be buried!

From this hint Susanna developed her farce, and in acknowledgment thereof entitled it *A Bickerstaff's Burying,*

and dedicated it, in an epistle marked with considerable humour, "to the Magnificent Company of the Upholders, &c"—"whom the judicious Censor of Great Britain has so often condescended to mention." The passage pertinent to our purpose runs as follows:

"What an immense sum might be raised from your art to carry on the war, would you, like true Britons, exert your power? The people being fond of sights, what might not be gathered at a funeral, when the rooms are clad in sable, the body dressed out with all your skilful care, the tapers burning in their silver-sockets, the weeping virgins fixed like statues round, and aromatic gums perfume the chambers, I think it preferable to the puppet-show, and a penny a head for all the curious, would, I dare be positive, amount to more than the candle-tax; and so make death subservient to the living.

"But this, Gentlemen, I leave to your superior judgment in politic principles; and only beg leave to remind you, that in this crowded town, there are a prodigious number of Mr. Bickerstaff's dead men, that swarm about streets; therefore, for the sakes of the most ingenious parts of mankind, you ought to take care to inter them out of the way, since he that does no good in his generation, should not be reckoned among the living.

"And now to conclude, Gentlemen, I hope you'll pardon this liberty I have taken, and accept this as a token of the respect I bear your noble Society: I honour you, though I have no desire of falling into your hands, but I think we poets are in no danger of that, since our real estate lies in the brain, and our personal consists in two or three loose scenes, a few couplets for the tag of an act, and a slight sketch for a song, and as I take it, you are not over-fond of paper-credit, where there is no probability of recovering the debt: So wishing you better customers, I except [? expect] no return, but am proud of subscribing myself, Gentlemen, your most obedient humble servant."

The writers who have sought to trace Mrs. Centlivre's play to a French "original," which must have been a translation of her work, produced in Paris nearly three months later, and to an early translation of the *Arabian Nights,* had overlooked the obvious. Her application of the theme may of course have had such further inspiration though it has so far not been traced. Her play concerns the fortunes of people wrecked on the island of Casgar while bound for the East Indies. The captain of a wrecked vessel falls in with an English lady and her beautiful half-English niece, and when the former unveils recognises her as an old acquaintance:

Captain. Ha! Mrs. Take-it! Why, what wind blew you hither?

Lady Mezro. Just such another as brought you, I fancy; our ship was bound to Madras.

Captain. So was mine.

Lady M. After three days' tempestuous weather, having lost our mainmast, and all our tackle, expecting nothing but death, when by a sudden gust our vessel was driven upon yon dreadful rock, which split her into a thousand pieces, and only I by Providence was saved.

Captain. Thank Heaven, I've not lost one man; I pity your misfortune, and yet, by your appearance, 'tis a fault to pity you, for it has turned to your advantage. Prithee what business had you in the Indies?

Lady M. To get a husband; you know few women go there but to make their fortunes.

Captain. Which I suppose you have done here, madam?

Lady M. An Emir, which is a Lord, you must understand, walking by the seaside, spied me on the rock, and kindly helped me down, fell in love, and married me; and I am now one of the greatest women upon the place.

Captain. I am glad on't, with all my soul. Who is this lady? Another of my old acquaintances too?

Lady M. No, I promise you; there's a face never saw

Covent Garden. She's my husband's niece, the best humoured woman in the world; and for her beauty, let that speak for itself, (*turns up her veil*), so, I see by your eyes you like her.

Isabinda. (*Aside.*) Grant, great Prophet, that he may! for I like him, I'm sure.

Captain. Like her! Egad, if your island's peopled with such angels, 'tis certainly the land of promise, and every ship will put in here for provision.

Lady M. She's the only handsome one in it, I promise you; her mother was English, and cast hither by such another accident as myself.

Isabinda. And do you think this face will do in Covent Garden, Captain?

Captain. In Covent Garden, madam! Where would it not do? Ha! Your skin's as smooth as the sea in a calm, and your eyes outshine the sun after a storm; your voice as sweet as siren's songs; and 'tis greater pleasure to behold you, than land after a dangerous voyage. I'll settle here, I'm resolved.

Lady M. (*Aside.*) Ah, the right London strain.

Isabinda. (*Aside.*) And I'd rather go with him.

Captain. Where the devil is my ship's crew? I'll have the bottom of my vessel beat out immediately, that I may never put to sea again.

Isabinda. I'm afraid, young gentleman, you'll change your note if you knew the custom of this country.

Lady M. Indeed, my quondam spark, you'd be glad to get off in a cock-boat if you do, by that time you've been married half so long as I have—I'm sure I would.

Captain. Ay! why so? you shine in jewels.

Lady M. I once thought riches the greatest, but now I find them the least part of happiness.

Captain. Oh, you want to see dear England again, and dazzle the eyes of your old acquaintance.

Lady M. That's not the cause.

Captain. Your husband is old, I suppose?

Lady M. True.

Captain. What is that to my repentance? This lady is young.

Lady M. Then he is ugly as a baboon.

Captain. Yet wide; this lady's as handsome as a cherubim.

Lady M. He's jealous as a Spaniard, as barbarous as a Turk, and as ill-natured as an old woman; and I hate him as heartily as one beauty does another; yet fear him as much as you merchant-men do a French privateer.

[A messenger comes in to declare that the Emir is dying, and the Lady Mezro goes off distractedly crying "Oh, I must be buried with him alive."]

Captain. Ha! how's that? Buried alive! I'm thunderstruck! Say, I conjure you, madam (*to Isabinda*), and explain to me this riddle.

Isabinda. It is, sir, the barbarous custom of our country; first ordained from frequent poisoning here, that which so-ever of the married pair die first, the survivor is buried with alive, dressed and adorned for a second nuptial.

Captain. (*Aside*). Egad, it has turned my stomach against the first. Unheard of barbarity! Is none exempt the pain of the country?

Isabinda. None; all let down a deep hollow mountain, with some loaves of bread, and some bottles of water on which they may feed for some time, and then expire within the loathsome dungeon. My mother in her bloom was with my father buried: I was but thrice three moons old; yet I remember even then it raised a horror in me, and as I grew up, a fixed resolution in me, never to wed in this cursed place.

Captain. Faith, you had reason, madam, and I admire that anybody does.

Isabinda. Custom has made it easy to the true Casgarian race, but I have a British soul.

Captain. You must be rescued from this imposition; your aunt too must be saved.

Isabinda. But how? If he dies, the officers of justice seize her; nay, 'tis death for all the household if information be not given straight. Upon the wedding day, two coffins are always brought into the bride-chamber, as part of the ceremony.

Captain. Egad, I should have small appetite to finish the ceremony at the sight of 'em.

Isabinda. This is the deplorable state of matrimony in our country.

The Emir, as it proves, is but feigning illness as a way of securing the devoted attention of the wife whose very life depends on his. The English captain recognises this and gets the lady to feign sudden death, to the distraction of the seemingly doomed husband. In the consequent confusion the recently-wrecked people get away with their ship and carry off the Lady Mezro and Isabinda, and the Emir is left to declare it "the most comfortable loss that ever man had" and to resolve that never again will he marry. It is a lively and ridiculous farce; indeed, much what a farce should be, and it is interesting to recall that the part of the Captain was enacted by a member of the Drury Lane Company named Bickerstaff, and that the part of one of his sailors was taken by "Mr. Miller"—the actor who after his death nearly thirty years later was to gain immortality as the Joe Miller "of facetious memory."

XI

At the end of 1710 Mrs. Centlivre returned to comedy, and sought to exploit the popularity of her droll character of the busy-body by making him the eponymous hero of another comedy. *The Marplot; or, the Second Part of the Busy-Body,* produced at Drury Lane Theatre on December 30, met with considerable success, though it is by no means as good a play as *The Busy-body* to which it is in the nature of a sequel. The scenes are laid in Lisbon, and thither for one reason or another certain of the characters of the

earlier comedy are taken and play their parts in an imbroglio of amours,* in which the trick of disguise is used with a fresh variation, the susceptible hero being rescued from an awkward situation with a married lady by the arrival of his wife disguised. The fact that Charles believes his wife to be in England at the time may perhaps be held sufficient explanation of his not recognising her. The comedy is again one in which the author shows herself better in devising situations, and suggesting character for filling out by the actor rather than for any happy quality in the dialogue. That the actors were capable of rendering it a good entertainment was shown by the way that the play held its own during the greater part of the century. When this play was printed the author dedicated it to the Duke of Portland, who is reported to have acknowledged the compliment with a present of forty guineas. In that dedication Mrs. Centlivre deplored the misfortune of her sex in being "deterred from the advantages of a learned education," adding "but as our expressions are artless our sentiments are less disguised." Then came a very neatly turned compliment: "Had I, my Lord, the skill of a writer, I should here record your noble father's zeal for his royal master, and celebrate that care and fidelity which preserved the life of our deliverer: but instead of mentioning this obligation which my late Lord Portland laid on every man in England, I confine myself to what we owe him for being your father." The happy turn may be said to have earned the golden compliment by which it was acknowledged.

When about 1760 it was said "the nobility of Dublin lately went in crowds to see [this] heretofore least regarded of her plays," the closing words were not

* A curious point in connection with this play is that when reprinted later in the 18th century it was described as *Marplot in Lisbon*, and when the works of Mrs. Centlivre were collected in 1761, and again when reprinted in 1872, not only was this title given it but the, supposedly original, cast which was given was not that of the original performance at all, but of one given about 1760 at Drury Lane, (with the omission of one of the principal characters), and this without a word of explanation that it was so.

quite true of *Marplot,* for its successor, which was produced at Drury Lane a little over a year later (January 19, 1712) was by 1760 certainly less regarded. This was *The Perplexed Lovers,* a comedy based on a Spanish play, which failed—not, it would seem, owing to certain freedoms of language, such *doubles ententes* as must even at that time have appeared to pass beyond accustomed license, but owing to the holding up of the epilogue which should have been spoken by Nance Oldfield. For some reason the license for the original epilogue was refused, and though it was duly licensed next day, there were threats of disturbance in the theatre if it should be spoken. Whether the trouble arose over the few lines of compliment to Prince Eugene, then on a visit to London, or one line in honour of the Duke of Marlborough, it is impossible to say. The episode is an illustration of the difficulties of the dramatist in those days, on the slightest suggestion of political significance.

That Susanna Centlivre was not wanting in courage was sufficiently shown on the printing of the play when it was furnished with an unusual variety of prefatory matter. There was a dedication to Sir Henry Furnesse, Bart., in whom "the worthy citizen and judicious statesman meet without the vice of either"; and there was a long preface concerning the ill fate of the play consequent upon its introduction of a new custom—that of being acted the first day without an epilogue. Then came a poem of one hundred and thirty lines addressed to Prince Eugene:

> Haste, Britons, your choicest youth prepare
> To meet and entertain this God of War;
> From him, and Marlborough, let your soldiers take
> Such bright examples as true heroes make:
> Be brave like them, like them discharge their trust,
> To Anne be loyal, to their country just;
> So shall their acts strike envy's censure dumb,
> And thus Britannia rival ancient Rome.

Then came the prologue, the epilogue of the second night ("spoken by Mr. Norris in mourning"), and the original epilogue, the delay in licensing which had caused all the pother. How and why that epilogue offended the authorities it is difficult to realise. It began thus:

> In these good times when war is like to cease,
> And Europe soon expects a general peace;
> Ye beaux, half-wits, and critics, all may know,
> I from Apollo come a Plenipo;

and went on to say that in all future works for the stage Apollo's poets would never represent men and women as they were,

> But on the critic judgment shall bestow,
> Sense on the witling, beauty on the beau;

while

> In all future scenes the sex shall see
> Themselves as charming as they wish to be;
> For them he will ordain new comic rules,
> And never more will make them doat on fools:
> And when he rises to the tragic strain,
> None but true heroes shall their favours gain;
> Such as that stranger* who has graced our land,
> Of equal fame for council and command.
> A prince, whose wisdom, valour and success,
> The gazing world with acclamations bless;
> By no great captain in past times outdone,
> And in the present equalled but by ONE†
> These fair conditions will, I hope, compose
> All wars between the poets and their foes.
> Come, sign the peace, and let this happy age
> Produce a League in favour of the Stage:
> But should this fail, at least our author prays
> A truce may be concluded for six days.

* Prince Eugene. † Duke of Marlborough.

The "six days" for which the author prayed would have given her the theatre takings for the third and sixth performances. There is no evidence that the play even reached a third performance—in which case the author's takings would have been nothing at all!

A passage from Susanna's preface may be given as well, showing as it does something of her spirit, and suggesting that it may have been the compliment of Marlborough which occasioned all the trouble:

"The sinking of my play cut me not half so deep as the notion I had, that there could be people of this nation so ungrateful as not to allow a single compliment to a man that has done such wonders for it. I am not prompted by any private sinister end, having never been obliged to the Duke of Marlborough, otherwise than as I shared in common with my country; as I am an English woman, I think myself obliged to acknowledge my obligation to his Grace for the many glorious conquests he has attained, and the many hazards he has run, to establish us a nation free from the insult of a foreign power. I know not what they call Whigs, or how they distinguish between them and Tories: but if the desire to see my country secured from the Romish yoke, and flourish by a firm, lasting, honourable peace, to the glory of the best of Queens, who deservedly holds the balance of all Europe, be a Whig, then I am one, else not. I have printed the epilogue, that the world may judge whether 'tis such as has been represented. So much for that."

From a manuscript note in a copy of *The Adventures of Rivella* (see p. 84) in the British Museum, we learn that "The young Chevalier d'Aumon (Louis, Duc d'Aumont, ambassador of France) arrived here in 1712. He gave Mrs. Centlivre a gold snuff-box for her poem of *The Masquerade,* which she addressed to him." Unfortunately that poem has not been traced.

XII

Perhaps it was as a consequence of the ill-fortune attending *The Perplexed Lovers* that over two years elapsed before Susanna Centlivre produced another play. When she did so, however, it was to score triumphantly once more, with what has been described as the best of her comedies. *The Wonder! a Woman Keeps a Secret,* which was first given at Drury Lane on April 27, 1714, was not only a success at the time but is one of the three of its author's works which longest held the stage, and the one that has appeared in more separate editions—upwards of a score—than any other of Mrs. Centlivre's works. It is a striking example of the way in which the dramatist was gifted with the power of presenting character for the actors to realise, and in devising situations which though we may now regard them as somewhat ridiculous, are yet unforced, arising from the circumstances presented. Violante, the woman who keeps a secret does so at the possible, indeed as it seems inevitable, cost of her own happiness. She has pledged herself to a friend not to reveal something, and holds to that pledge even when revealing of the secret would clear her with her own jealous lover, when the friend's lover is found in Violante's bedroom. Bedroom scenes by the way are so notable in Susanna's work that it may be regarded as another wonder that our present-day playwrights have not turned to her for hints.

If on occasion she could think that less than justice was done to her work by the performers and the public, Susanna had the courage to say so; but when, as with *The Wonder,* she scored a signal success, she was equally ready to be generous in her recognition of the way in which others had contributed to that success. When the play was published it had a prefatory tribute to the principal actors which reveals the author in a very pleasant light. "I freely acknowledge myself," she wrote, "obliged to the actors in general and to Mr. Wilks and Mrs. Oldfield in particular;

and I owe them this justice to say, that their inimitable action only could support a play at such a season and among so many benefits. Let this encourage our English bards to write, furnish but the artful player with materials and his skill will lay the foundations for your fame. I must again repeat that which I meet with everywhere, I mean the just admiration of the performance of Mr. Wilks and Mrs. Oldfield, and own that they much outdid in action the strongest of my conceptions; for though nature was my aim in the last act of my comedy, yet nature herself, were she to paint a love quarrel, would only copy them."

Never, surely, did any of our dramatic authors more generously acknowledge indebtedness to those who had presented their work in the round. It is such scraps of self-revelation that we get in some of her prefaces that make us regret the more how little has come down to us of the personality of Susanna Centlivre, the lack of such gossip or such letters as would more fully reveal what manner of woman she was.

Her sturdy attitude on political matters we have already seen expressed, and in the dedication of *The Wonder* she newly emphasised her Protestantism and her opposition to those who were seeking to make Queen Anne express herself in favour of a Stuart successor. Mrs. Centlivre claims indeed to be the first of our English authors to hail the Electoral Prince of Hanover with the homage of a dedication—and little more than three months later that Prince, as things befell, was heir to the King of England. The material part of this dedication "to His Serene Highness George Augustus, Electoral Prince of Hanover, Duke and Marquess of Cambridge, Earl of Milford Haven, &c.," runs thus:

"Your Highness, who has been hitherto a stranger among us, cannot easily conceive the consequence we repose in you; and it will, perhaps, hardly be believed in

future ages that the first report of the Duke of Cambridge's design to visit us, should raise the *public credit* of the nation.

"We are filled with pleasure, to think that the most accomplished of Princes will perfect himself in the arts of Government under the eye and direction of the greatest of Queens.

"If it is possible that there should be a set of men among us who can wish to see the country become a province of France, it is, I think, pretty evident that your residence in Great Britain will soon put an end to such impious expectations. . . . The Balance of Europe will doubtless be kept steady by the hand which has already performed such wonders in order to maintain it; our religion, our laws, and civil rites (*sic*) can be in no danger under a prince who, from his conversation with our nobility and his presence at their most important debates, will have a perfect insight into all the parts of our Constitution. . . . There is no doubt but you will soon be made the subject of more correct pens, and receive a just tribute from the greatest authors of our nation: in the meantime, though I am perhaps the most unworthy, I have at least one advantage, that I am the first who has shown my respect in this manner and sued for your protection.

"I am your Highness's
Most obedient,
Most devoted,
Most humble servant,
SUSANNA CENT-LIVRE."

At the time when our dramatist was writing thus, it was, as she was able to proclaim boldly a year or so later, "almost criminal to pay any mark of respect" to the prospective successor to Queen Anne or to his family. However, when on August 1st, 1714, the Queen died, the Elector came quietly to the throne as King George I, and Susanna's dedicatee was in due course Prince of Wales.

XIII

On the news, "the Queen is dead, long live the King," Mrs. Centlivre set about writing a poem to the new monarch and this was published at the Inner Temple Gate as a boldly printed folio pamphlet of eight pages, entitled—half-title and title took up four of the pages—*A Poem Humbly Presented to His Most Sacred Majesty George, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, upon His Accession to the Throne. By Susanna Centlivre.* It is appropriately fulsome in laudation of the Hanoverian:

"The lark, while she her gratitude to prove
Lauds with her sprightly notes, immortal Jove
Shuts not His ear against the sparrow's lays;
Whose tuneless pipe can only chirp His praise.
Thus I, though learned bards before have strung
Their sounding lyres, and most divinely sung,
Fear not the dictates of my soul to own,
The less of art, the more of love is shown:
Vouchsafe, great Prince, to hear my humble muse,
And let my zeal my want of skill excuse.

Hail! Hero born to rule and reconcile
The fatal discords of our English isle!
Our pure religion, long the mark of Rome,
Reprieved by you escapes her final doom.
Unnumbered joys you to Britannia bring,
And *Io Pæans* through the nation ring.
Delightful Liberty, with fears half dead,
Hears the glad noise, and rears her pleasing head;
Her slackened nerves their former strength regain,
And she her life redates from George's reign. . . .
Prophetic sages had this day in view,
And named our patron as a type of you:
So men to oracles had once regard,
'Till the great Saviour of the world appeared.

The swelling waves, which often heretofore
Our yet loved King, the glorious William, bore,
Proud in conveying his adopted son,
Part with regret, and murmur as they run.

Welcome, great guardian of our British land;
Receive the nation rescued by thy hand.
A wicked race of men, for private ends,
Had raised her baffled foes, and sunk her friends,
Dispersed her strength, and Royal Ann betrayed
Whilst in the sunshine of her smiles they played;
The ruin rolled too far for her to stem,
Whose greatest weakness was her choice of them:
When Heav'n in pity to those suppliant few,
Who owned its power, and kept their vows to you,
Came to our aid, reversed our lowering fate,
And by thy destined arm retrieved the State.

Hail, great deliverer, much loved Monarch, hail!
No more shall France, no more shall Rome prevail:
By Heav'n's decree, you and your issue stand
Sure signs of future safety to this land.
So when the Almighty caused the Floods to cease,
He fixed his bow in token of the peace."

Though somewhat highfalutin, the lines are of interest as emphasising their author's views as explicit anti-Romanist and implicit anti-Stuart—though it may well be believed that the new-come King from Hanover was unable to read them! Whether they were rewarded by Royal largess cannot be said but the writer's husband continued to hold under the new ruler the position in the Royal menage which he had held under Anne.

When Susanna sought to give dramatic utterance to her views in connection with the new political regime it was to learn that the Stage was still less free than the Press; though the Whigs had won in the somewhat indecent political scramble that marked the closing weeks of Queen

Anne's reign, and there was assurance of the continuance of Protestantism, and promise of a period of settled conditions in the country, she was to find that she was not to be permitted to give in the theatre dramatic expression to her rejoicings. She wrote two short farces, *A Gotham Election* and *A Wife Well-Managed,* in one of which she made satiric fun of political contests generally, and in the other of which she " exposed a Popish priest," and greatly to her indignation neither of these was accorded a license—though the latter one when printed had against the list of characters the names of the actors whom they were " designed to have been represented by." It is probably this fact that has led to the statement that the little piece was, though the author's own testimony shows that it was not, performed at Drury Lane. Failing to get them licensed for performance, she sent them to the booksellers for publication, together, with a dedication to James Craggs, junior, then Cofferer to the Prince of Wales. The bookseller apparently thought it a waste to make one pamphlet of what might reasonably be issued as two and published the farces separately—but with the joint-dedication prefacing *The Gotham Election* only.

" The subject being upon elections the Master of the Revels did not care to meddle with it, and the Players act nothing without his license," wrote the author, and moreover " the word ' Election ' it seems immediately furnished out a thousand scandalous stories and I was become the subject of every coffee-house in town." News that license for a play had been refused doubtless led to all sorts of rumours as to the reasons for the refusal, but an author had at least the power of publishing what might not be performed and readers must have found considerable entertainment in the farcical presentation of the sort of canvassing that was then carried on, the flimsy cloak which was used to disguise bribery, and the equally unfavourable light in which the author showed the supporters of the three candidates. Though the term " Tory " is supposed to have

become common by the time, it is noticeable that Mrs. Centlivre does not employ it but uses "High boy" in opposition to Whig.

In addressing James Craggs, the author said: "The *Election,* which had the honour to pass your approbation, was objected against as a party matter: I fancy both sides will agree that there are unreasonable heats and extravagancies belonging to each of them, which deserve to be exposed, laughed at, and exploded by all good lovers of their country, since by such arts our enemies find their way to poison our constitution." So impartially did she distribute her satire that it may well be that if the farce had been produced it would have met with such a reception from partisans as the Master of the Revels evidently anticipated. For reading it is one of the liveliest and most diverting of its author's productions.

In the second of her "two *petite* pieces" Susanna gave so loose a rein to her strong anti-Romish views that it is not altogether surprising that a license for its performance was refused. The scene is Lisbon, and the cast consists of a Portuguese Don, his beautiful young wife, an amorous priest, the lady's maid, and an Irish serving-man (who was to have been impersonated by Joe Miller). The whole story is that of the interception by the husband of a letter from his wife making an assignation with the priest, and of his borrowing a priest's garb, visiting his wife thus disguised—and giving her and her maid "penance" by castigating them severely with a rope. They believe that it was veritably the priest, and when the genuine one arrives, set about him unmercifully as he is amorously contemplating the sleeping lady. The husband having effectually dispelled his wife's fancy for her confessor finishes with a moralising couplet in the fashion of the period:

> "When wives, like mine, give inclination scope,
> No cure for cuckoldom like oil of rope."

It is not improbable that the bedroom scene of the skilful playlet may have had something to do with its failure to secure any license other than its own, but Mrs. Centlivre thought otherwise:

"It was said there would be offence taken at the exposing a Popish priest. Good God! To what sort of people are we changed! Are those worthy people (the enemies of our most avowed and irreconcilable enemy) to be treated with so much tenderness? Is not their very profession treason in any subject of Great Britain? Have our neighbours in France treated the clergy of the reformed religion with the same regard? But let that pass, since they have their friends and advocates even here, I hope I have some too; it is not an unpardonable sin with everybody to wish well to the liberties and religion of one's own country. No, sir, I assure myself you have goodness enough to overlook a great many other faults, where you find an honest and disinterested zeal for our present happy constitution. You, whose good judgment ever engaged you on the right side, the Protestant Succession, and the interest of Britain; YOU who scorned to herd with the betrayers of your country, or raise your fortunes on the ruins of your fellow subjects; YOU who so generously espoused my interest, when you knew my intention of dedicating to His Royal Highness, then Duke of Cambridge, will have the goodness to protect a woman who has no other merit but her good inclinations, and perpetual wishes for the prosperity of the present Government. These were principles which, you know, she was not ashamed of owning, when it was almost criminal to pay any remark of respect to that Royal Family, under which our laws and our liberties are now so happily secured."

Whether Susanna's dedication of the earlier piece to the Prince had met with the customary reward it is impossible to say, but Craggs responded in the approved fashion by sending her a present of twenty guineas, by the hand of Mrs. Bracegirdle. Such gifts from patron to author must

have been the chief reward of publication for it is difficult to believe that four or five thousand copies were sold of a play published as a shilling pamphlet, and easy to believe that the booksellers of the day would not pay their authors more than five pounds for every thousand copies sold.

XIV

Early in 1716 Susanna Centlivre appeared again as an occasional poet with *Verses Upon the Sickness and Recovery of Robert Walpole.* Though not titular head of King George's first Whig Government, Walpole was regarded as the outstanding leader of the Whig party, and when he fell ill early in April it was just after he had set things afoot towards impeaching members of the preceding ministry for treason, and his supporters were the more troubled. Susanna's verses took the form of an *Ode to Hygeia*—"best of all our earthly wealth, everlasting charmer Health"—in the course of which she implored

> "Great Hygeia, lend an ear,
> Britannia's prayer vouchsafe to hear,
> Britannia on thy aid relies,
> Help, or else her Walpole dies."

That Susanna Centlivre had no particular lyric gift is obvious, and the closing lines of her contribution to the testimony of Walpole's popularity could scarcely have been feebler than they are if it had been a first essay:

> "Our prayers prevail—the statesman lives,
> Behold the Deity arrives,
> And health again to Walpole gives.
> Britannia's welfare to restore,
> Oh may he never want it more."

After sampling that somewhat bald effort at verse-making we may show that Susanna could do better by citing a brief

poem *To the Duchess of Bolton, Upon Seeing Her Picture Drawn Unlike Her,* a piece which at least has the merit of running more trippingly:

" 'Tis true on canvas none can trace
The lines of beauteous Bolton's face
Or shadow out her air,
Perfection mocks the painter's art,
But turn your eyes into your heart,
You'll find her image there.

In visions thus to saints 'tis given
To gaze upon the joys of heaven,
And yet they all confess,
Something there is so glorious still
Which all their art with all their skill
Can never once express."

The Duchess of Bolton to whom those lines were addressed was Henrietta Crofts (third wife of the second duke), whose portrait was painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

Towards the close of 1716 Mrs. Centlivre made a second essay "in the tragedy walk." Even as many low comedians are said to nurse in secret the ambition to act the part of Hamlet, so the writer who had scored notable successes in comedy evidently nurtured a hope of succeeding as well in tragedy. Though her earliest essay had been tragedy, the failure of *The Perjured Husband* had not been so marked as to make her fully realise that her gifts had not been awarded her by the Tragic Muse. Turning, as so many dramatists had done before her, to the stories of Boccaccio, she there found a subject in the fatal love of Sigismonda and Guiscardo, a story which had been finely presented in narrative verse by Dryden a few years before. The play which she adapted from that tragic story was given at Drury Lane on December 17, 1716, with the title of *The Cruel Gift; or, Royal Resentment,* and was published

early in the following year with a dedication to Eustace Budgell, then chief secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland. Budgell, whom Susanna addresses as a kindred spirit, was a cousin of Joseph Addison, had assisted him on the *Spectator,* and been taken by him as colleague to Dublin. Mrs. Centlivre, who described herself as proud to be accounted one of Budgell's friends and to have it known to the world, wrote "for my part it has always been my ambition to desire the good opinion of men of your town; and I never have, or shall be ashamed of publishing the virtues of those who have been eminent in their services for our king, country and legal constitution; and in this view (if anything of mine can reach so far) would I be looked upon by posterity."

As we have said Mrs. Centlivre only adapted the story, and altered its conclusion to such "happy ending" as was more suitable to stage representation than that of the original, bringing this about by means of the introduction of a subsidiary romance. Though written in appallingly poor blank verse, the author showed once more her skill in devising a story for stage-setting. In the original story we have nothing more than the daughter of a proud King secretly marrying a mere courtier, of the discovery of this fact and the King's prompt executing of the young man and sending his heart in a vessel of wine to the Princess and of her death embracing it. The dramatist makes the King order the young man's death and the sending of his heart to the Princess. That order is, however, only apparently obeyed. When the Princess, with her supposed husband's heart, is resolved on death, it becomes known that the couple had been married by a hermit who was not only an exiled Duke of Milan and a kinsman of the King, but also father of the youth supposed slain. That youth had a sister whose lover saves his life and so brings about the happy close, by having sent the heart of a soldier killed in a fracas instead of that of the intended object of the royal rage.

From the Prologue, by "Mr. Sewell," we learn that the play had been designed for production two years earlier:

> "It should have courted you the last hard frost,
> But you in ice and politics were lost,
> Two slippery things. Some knew it to their cost.
> The prudent mother, therefore, with good reason,
> Weaned not this child before a better season."

From the Epilogue, by Nicholas Rowe, we have a political touch that might have been inspired by Susanna herself:

> "How many worthy gentlemen of late,
> Swore to be true to Mother-Church and State;
> When their false hearts were secretly maintaining
> Yon trim King Pepin, at Avignon reigning?*
> Shame on the canting crew of soul-insurers,
> That Tyburn-tree of speech-making Nonjurors;
> Who in new-fangled terms, old truths explaining,
> Teach honest Englishmen damn'd double meaning."

An additional six lines of compliment to the Prince of Wales appear to have been added for the author's benefit, presumably the third performance, on which occasion the Prince is said to have been present.

XV

In *A Bold Stroke for a Wife,* produced at Drury Lane on February 3, 1718, Susanna Centlivre wrote what may be regarded as the most lastingly popular of her nineteen plays, for it was recurringly in the bills at the theatres for over a century, and the play was not only printed nine times during the 18th century but a dozen further times during the 19th; while furthermore one of

* James, the "Old Pretender."

its characters has joined the goodly company of those drama-made people whose names have become familiar in men's mouths as household words. This is the real Simon Pure.

The ingenious, if somewhat farcical, plot of the play, the author doubly boasted, in dedication and prologue, was original; "the plot is entirely new, and the incidents wholly owing to my own invention; not borrowed from our own, or translated from the works of any foreign poet; so that they have at least the charm of novelty to recommend them." And again:

"To-night we come upon a bold design,
To try to please without one borrowed line:
Our plot is new, and regularly clear,
And not one single tittle from Molière.
O'er buried poets we with caution tread,
And parish sextons leave to rob the dead. . . . .
As for our play, 'tis English humour all:
Then will you let our manufacture fall?
Would you the honour of our nation raise,
Keep English credit up, and English plays."

The brave new plot was one that showed how Colonel Fainwell wooed and won Mistress Lovely, "a fortune of thirty thousand pounds," who had been left by her father in the guardianship of four strangely contrasting and antagonistic characters, with each of whom in turn she was to live for three months in each year, and the consent of all of whom was to be necessary before she could marry. In the opening scene all this is made plain in the talk of the Colonel, his friend Freeman and Sackbut, a vintner. The first-named describes how he had met the girl at Bath.

"*Colonel*: She visited a lady who boarded in the same house with me; I liked her person, and found an opportunity to tell her so. She replied, she had no objection to

mine; but if I could not reconcile contradictions I must not think of her, for that she was condemned to the caprice of four persons, who never yet agreed in any one thing, and she was obliged to please them all.

Sackbut: 'Tis most true, sir; I'll give you a short description of the men, and leave you to judge of the poor lady's condition. One is a kind of virtuoso, a silly half-witted fellow, but positive and surly, fond of everything antique and foreign, and wears his clothes of the fashion of the last century; dotes upon travellers, and believes more of Sir John Mandeville than he does of the Bible.

Colonel: That must be a rare old fellow!

Sackbut: Another is a 'Change broker; a fellow that will outlie the devil for the advantage of stock, and cheat the father that got him, in a bargain; he is a great stickler for trade, and hates every man that wears a sword.

Freeman: He is a great admirer of the Dutch management, and swears they understand trade better than any nation under the sun.

Sackbut: The third is an old beau, that has May in his fancy and dress, but December in his face and his heels; he admires all the new fashions, and those must be French; loves operas, balls, masquerades, and is always the most tawdry of the whole company on a Birthday.

Colonel: These are pretty opposite to one another, truly! and the fourth, what is he, landlord?

Sackbut: A very rigid Quaker, whose quarter begun this day. I saw Mrs. Lovely go in, not above two hours ago, Sir Philip set her down. What think you now, Colonel, is not the poor lady to be pitied?

Colonel: Ay, and rescued too, landlord.

Freeman: In my opinion, that's impossible.

Colonel: There is nothing impossible to a lover. What would not a man attempt for a fine woman and thirty thousand pounds? Besides, my honour is at stake; I promised to deliver her,—and she bid me win her and wear her.

Sackbut: That's fair, faith.

Freeman: If it depended upon knight-errantry, I should not doubt your setting free the damsel; but to have Avarice, Impertinence, Hypocrisy, and Pride, at once to deal with, requires more cunning than generally attends a man of honour.

Colonel: My fancy tells me, I shall come off with glory."

Not for nothing is the hero named Fainwell, and man of honour or not, his cunning proves equal to overreaching each of the four guardians, winning their unwitting consent by ingenious trickery successively and in the most diverse and certainly diverting fashion. He approaches each of the four men as it were in his own humour, and in the case of the fourth one even personates an expected visitor—one Simon Pure, a "quaking preacher," from Bristol. When the real Simon Pure turns up Fainwell gets him sent off as the impostor until the Quaker guardian's signature has been obtained to the document which means that the "bold stroke" has succeeded. The play is a succession of farcical episodes, with opportunities for good character actors, with well-devised situations and indifferent dialogue. As a late 18th century critic declared, "it has no scenes of wit that demanded vivacity of intelligence to collect, and a mind skilled and exercised in remote resemblances to combine. Humour it has, but it is of the coarsest kind—not over delicate, nor exceedingly chaste."

When printed *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* was dedicated in fulsome panegyric to Philip, Duke of Wharton, who had been made a member of the Irish House of Lords in the preceding year, and had but lately, though but a few weeks over his twentieth year, been created a duke. Her extravagant laudation of the young nobleman suggests that Mrs. Centlivre had not met Wharton, or if she had was too dazzled to read his character aright, for in the dozen years remaining to him he was to become known as one of the most notorious figures, one of the most dissolute profligates

of his time; nor could she have known of the way in which he had been toying with the Pretender. One passage in the dedication is such delicious rubbish that we cannot refrain from citing it as an extreme example of that panegyric of the patron which Lord Macaulay derided.

"Your love for the muses," said Susanna to the twenty-year-old ducal prodigy, "shows a sweetness of temper, and generous humanity, peculiar to the greatness of your soul; for such virtues reign not in the breast of every man of quality. Defer no longer then, my lord, to charm the world with the beauty of your numbers, and show the poet, as you have done the orator; convince our unthinking Britons, by what vile arts France lost her liberty; and teach them to avoid their own misfortunes, as well as to weep over Henry IV, *who* (if it were possible for him to know) *would forgive the bold assassin's hand, for the honour of having his fall celebrated by your Grace's pen.*"

In all the extravagance of 18th century dedications it would not be easy to match for ludicrous bathos the words which we have italicised.

The works of Nicholas Rowe, first Poet Laureate under the first of the Georges, have lain neglected more or less completely since the close of the century to which he belonged, but as dramatist and poet he was a person of considerable importance in his day, and one contemporary at least thought that with his death, on December 6, 1718, and Congreve's retirement, the stage had lost its two "most substantial entertainers." Rowe was buried in Westminster Abbey, and a few days later Edmund Curll published *Musarum Lachrymæ; or, Poems to the Memory of Nicholas Rowe, Esq.,* by Several Hands. One of the contributors was Mrs. Centlivre, but her poem, a somewhat conventional and undistinguished *Pastoral to the Honoured Memory of Mr. Rowe,* need not detain us long; the only true human note comes in the final couplet, when, speaking of the poet's widow, Menalcas says—

"Methinks I hear her to her babe complain,
The only relic of her darling swain:
The child she tells his every art and grace,
And with her tears bedews the infant's face;
Whilst the poor babe, unknowing of her cares,
Cooes in her face, and smiles at all her fears."

It was in December, 1718, that Rowe died, and in January of the following year another poet of some importance in his day, Sir Samuel Garth, also died. Shortly after, as we learn from a young poet, then lately expelled from Oxford for making too free with his Whig opinions, Susanna Centlivre made what a later wit called a runaway knock at Death's door. The young poet, Nicholas Amhurst,* addressed lines *To Mrs. Centlivre, at that time dangerously ill,* in which, after referring to the deaths of Rowe and Garth, he proceeded:

"Two bards at once the tyrant swept away,
To feed the worm, and mix with vulgar clay;
Nor yet content, unbounded in his rage,
Of thee too he attempts to rob the age.
Insulting Death! oh, stop thy savage hand,
Reverse, tremendous Power, the rash command;
Already you have given us too much grief,
Be kind at last and minister relief;
Heal our foreboding fears, assuage our pain,
And give Centlivre back to health again."

This was published in *A New Miscellany of Poems* (1720), and along with it another poem addressed by Amhurst *To Mrs. Centlivre upon her desiring him to read and correct a poem,* in which he gave her the name generally reserved for the earlier poet, Katherine Phillips:

* Later author of *Terræ Filius*, a valuable account of the University of Oxford of the time, and editor of *The Craftsman*, the most remarkable political periodical that had then been published.

"In vain Orinda on my aid
And weaker judgment you rely;
Too rashly, fair-one, you persuade
A mortal to correct the sky."

XVI

More than four years elapsed after *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* was produced before Susanna Centlivre had another comedy ready. This was *The Artifice,* brought out at Drury Lane on October 2, 1722, and it was to prove the last of her work as a dramatic author. As to its reception nothing seems to be recorded, but it is an eminently characteristic piece of Mrs. Centlivre's comedy devising. Though more complicated, with its subsidiary plottings, than any of its companions, it shows the writer's good and bad qualities as a playwright, and has some more markedly lively points in the dialogue than most of its predecessors; it has also rather more than its share of that coarseness which runs through Susanna Centlivre's work for the stage as markedly as through that of Aphra Behn. The impropriety implicit or explicit is less flagrant than in the case of Aphra Behn's work but is nevertheless an essential part of it.

In *The Artifice* the author gave to one of her characters the same name, Fainwell, as the hero of the immediately preceding play, and for the same reason, he could so well feign to be somebody other than he was, that being a subaltern officer he wooed a wealthy widow by becoming her country-lout of a footman and so giving her letters as from a supposed well-to-do landowner (also himself) and finally winning her to a secret marriage without her discovering the artifice. That, however, is but part of the subsidiary plotting in a crowded story; the main plot concerns Sir John Freeman and his brother Ned—both of whom woo the same lady, the former favoured by the lady and the latter by her father, for Sir John has been disinherited while his

younger brother has succeeded to the paternal estate of £40,000. Ned, who is of an amorous disposition, has promised marriage to a girl in Holland, and she is brought over with great dramatic effect; for, believing himself to be dying of poison, Ned marries her and makes restitution of the estates to his brother—only to realise that he has been the victim of a woman's artifice.

We have quoted on an early page what Dr. John Doran had to say of Aphra Behn as a dramatist, in language so virulent that it is difficult to believe that he was not emphasising a tradition rather than speaking of what he had actually read, and when we come to recall what he said of the work of Susanna Centlivre that impression is deepened. "Mrs. Centlivre had unobtrusive humour, sayings full of significance rather than wit, wholesome fun in her comic, and earnestness in her serious, characters. In *her* pictures of life she attracts the spectator. *There may be now and then, something, as in Dutch pictures, which had been as well away;* but this apart, all the rest is true, and pleasant, and hearty; the grouping perfect, the colour faithful and enduring."* The italicised words would not suggest that, bating perhaps a slight difference in the social atmosphere between the Restoration period and the first quarter of the 18th century, the coarseness of situation and expression of the later writer was in any way comparable with that of the earlier of whom the same critic had said that she was unequalled in "downright nastiness." It is certainly true that in dramatic craftsmanship Mrs. Centlivre was immeasurably the superior of Mrs. Behn.

XVII

Of Susanna's beginnings and early life we find a choice of queer stories; from the time that she became, as Pope sneeringly put it, "the cook's wife in Buckingham Court," we lose sight of the woman in the dramatist. It may, we

* *Their Majesties' Servants.* By John Doran.

think, be taken for granted that she was happily married and led a comfortable life—if we may assume that the saying "happy is the country that has no history" may be applied to those homes that make up a "country." "She lived in a decent, clean manner," says one chronicler; and that it was thought necessary to say so sheds some light on the time in which she lived. We are told of her friendship with some of the leading actors and actresses of the time, that for many years she kept up a constant correspondence with Sir Richard Steele, Nicholas Rowe, George Farquhar and other "gentlemen of eminence," but also, the letters do not appear have been preserved. The nearest we get to a personal impression of her is from the dramatic compilation supposed to have been made by Thomas Whincop, who says:

"If she had not a great deal of wit in her conversation she had much vivacity and good humour; she was remarkably good natured and benevolent in her temper, and ready to do any friendly office so far as it was in her power. She made herself some friends and many enemies by her strict attachment to Whig principles, even in the most dangerous times, and had she been a man, I dare say would have freely ventured her life in the cause."

It was, presumably in Buckingham Court, Spring Gardens, that Susanna Centlivre died on December 1, 1723. Three days later she was buried at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, then chapel of ease to the parish church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. In the following year her husband became Master-Cook to the King.

No attempt at a biography—apart from such summary accounts as appear in works of reference—has been made apart from that "account of her life" which prefaced the collection of her plays in 1761, and was reprinted in all its inadequacy and inaccuracy in 1871. That so-called account of Mrs. Centlivre's life consisted, as we have said, of but half a dozen pages, a great part of which was taken up with a gust of feminist frenzy. The anonymous

writer began: "Be it known that the person with a pen in hand is no other than woman not a little piqued to find that neither the nobility nor the commonalty of the year 1722 had spirit enough to erect in Westminster Abbey a monument justly to the *manes* of Mrs. Centlivre, whose works are full of lively incidents, genteel language, and humorous descriptions of real life, and deserved to have been recorded by a pen equal to that which celebrated the Life of Pythagoras."

CHAPTER IV

ELIZA HAYWOOD: THE "OUIDA" OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Early 18th century taste and manners—Appearance and reality—From the comedy of sex-intrigue to the comedy of manners—Linking Aphra Behn and Samuel Richardson —Eliza's vague beginnings—An American investigator's "finds"—London hosier's daughter—She is not *Steele's Sappho—Presumed wife of a clergyman—Actress in Dublin —First essay in highfalutin romance—Popularity and poetic tributes—Elopes from her husband—Reluctant to have her story known—Hinted scandals—Extraordinary pen activity—Essays in dramatic writing and acting—A very bad start in tragedy—Comedy scarce better—Romantic sensationalism—Early collected "Works"—"The 'Ouida' of the 18th century"—Literary links with Daniel Defoe —The literature of the deaf and dumb soothsayer— "Secret Memoirs"—"Caramania" and the English Court —Thinly veiled scandals—George II and Henrietta Howard—An absurd story—Relations with Richard Savage —From appreciation to vindictive depreciation—Pilloried in "the Dunciad"—Supposed reasons for this—Effects of the satire on Eliza's popularity—Greatly lessened literary output—Anti-Pamela, a highly improper story—"The Female Spectator"—Eliza Haywood's later work—From the passionate to the prim—First "novelist with a purpose."*

I

IN the early part of the 18th century "the national taste had become as vulgar as the national manners and as corrupt as the principles of a large majority of the public men of that period. The works which received the greatest encouragement were scandalous memoirs, secret

history surreptitiously obtained and sent forth under fictitious names (such as the books which came from the pens of Eliza Haywood, Mrs. Manley and other equally shameless female writers, and from the press of Edmund Curll) and ill-disguised obscenity."* In pessimistic mood it might be thought that that was no very special characteristic of the early part of the 18th century, that the words with but little modification might be applied to any of the successive generations up to the present. The historian of caricature put Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Haywood in the wrong order, but they and the " other equally shameless females " of whom he wrote were really no whit worse than the writers of Society fashionable and personal gossip in many of the newspapers and other periodicals from the close of the 18th century onwards. The personalia has become more trivial rather because the laws of libel have been tightened up a bit than because there is any great lessening of the public boulimy for scandal, any falling off in the demand for what " shameless writers " male or female, may produce concerning men and women who are in the public eye or who can be held there while the spotlight of scandal is on them. We are accustomed to speak of the difference between the Restoration and post-Restoration periods and our own as being a difference of taste, but it is perhaps rather a difference of attitude towards appearance than of any essential change in reality; we deprecate the public exploitation of certain things—and form societies for staging them or printing them for " private circulation," even for reproducing those things which we deplore as examples of the corrupt taste of an earlier generation!

II

Elizabeth Haywood was but a follower where others had blazed the way, first in the writing of amorous tales,

* Thomas Wright: *Caricature History of the Georges.*

or "novels" somewhat in the manner of Aphra Behn, and then in the exploiting of contemporary scandal by writing of the intrigues, actual or supposititious, of living people as though they belonged to some kingdom of romance in the way that had been so triumphantly inaugurated by Mary Manley. Yet though but a follower it may be claimed that she has a more definite position than either of her forerunners as a worker in the evolution of English fiction; and though but little concerning her personal character and story is now recoverable is by no means the least interesting of our quintet of queer women.

It is curious that in the cases of three out of our five women we are met with a certain vagueness concerning their beginnings, that in only two instances does history speak with any certitude as to their parentage. All were in their differing degrees professional writers, in days when women being such could scarcely be regarded as "quite nice"—even though by the mid part of the 18th century Dr. Johnson's crowning of Charlotte Lennox may be said to have given them professional recognition—and it is their lack of niceness in social behaviour, rather than their literary achievement which is most frequently made matter for comment. They are not only blamed for being what they were, but it is even made matter of reproach that they were not something else; that they wrote when coarseness of thought and expression was characteristic of the age is not to be blamed against them—it would have been yet more remarkable had they proved pioneers in the matter of taste in addition to being pioneers for their sex into the first of the professions in which it was to win a footing.

Together the five may be regarded as bridging the period from when the comedy of sex intrigue was displayed in drama and fiction at the end of the 17th century to when the comedy of manners had taken its place at the close of the 18th. In the case of Eliza Haywood—to use the form of her name generally accepted—we have one who in her own work may be said to have exemplified the change thus

broadly indicated: that change which had been initiated by Steele and Addison had by the second half of the same century worked something of a revolution to outward seeming; the coarseness which had been more or less flagrantly general on the highway of literature had come to be relegated to the disreputable byways.

Though Eliza Haywood's productive period began while Susanna Centlivre and Mary Manley were still writing, and she was a close imitator of the latter in the compilation or invention of *chroniques scandaleuse,* she had before the close of her career nearly forty years later, in part abandoned the exploitation of scandal and had actually become one of the innovators in that later form of fiction of a moralising strain associated with the name of Samuel Richardson and others, she had indeed quite early in her career claimed to be a writer with a moral purpose. It is worthy of note that she was in this respect even ahead of the great little printer-moralist. Austin Dobson has noted that the year which saw the first publication of Richardson's *Pamela* had already seen another book "of its own class" in Eliza Haywood's *The Unfortunate Princess,* but the author of that book had claimed to write with a moral purpose even fourteen years earlier.

III

With Eliza (or Elizabeth) Haywood (or Heywood) it will be seen that we pass from the archaic type of romance bordering on the fantastic, which may be thought to have derived from the lengthy romantic miscellanies of the French 16th century writers, to the more simply naturalistic story which was to triumph but a few years after her death in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield.*

It has, we think, too easily been accepted that Eliza Haywood was born "about 1693," the vague date is repeated in all works of reference, even curiously enough, by Dr. George Frisbie Whicher who some years ago made a special

study of *The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood.** Dr. Whicher is one of those American students who have with painstaking zeal investigated chosen by-ways of our common literature and in selecting as his subject Eliza Haywood took a theme which had before been wholly neglected. His investigations brought to light one or two new facts in her very scrappily recorded biography; he was able to give the name of Eliza Haywood's husband, before unrecorded, to show that instead of being deserted by that husband, as for a hundred and fifty years the reference books have said, she had deserted him, and moreover, as it seems to us, he satisfactorily fixes the dates of her birth while himself being content to repeat the old statement that "she was born in London, probably in 1693."

It was known that our author's patronymic was Fowler, and that her father was a London tradesman. Dr. Whicher established that "the London Parish registers contain no mention of an Eliza Fowler in 1693, but on 21 January, 1689, O.S. 'Elizabeth dau. of Robert ffowler and Elizabeth his wife' was christened at St. Peter's Cornhill. Later entries show that Robert was a hosier to his trade. Possibly in suppressing the other particulars of her life, Mrs. Haywood may have consigned to oblivion a year or two of her age, but in her numerous writings I have not found any allusion that could lead to her positive identification with the daughter of Robert Fowler." Yet curiously enough Dr. Whicher accepts her marriage on precisely similar evidence.

We may accept it that Elizabeth the daughter of Robert Fowler, hosier of the Cornhill district, who was christened on January 21, 1689-90 was our heroine—and it is at least worthy of note that another hosier of Cornhill, Daniel Defoe by name, became bankrupt about two years later, though whether there was any business connection between

* Published in 1915 as one of the "Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature."

Fowler and Defoe it is impossible to say. Of the early life of Eliza we know nothing, though she did many years later put it on record that she received an education more liberal than was ordinarily allowed to persons of her sex. It was perhaps that statement of hers which led to her being identified at the end of the 18th century with the Sappho of certain celebrated passages in *The Tatler* of the early part of the century.* The first of those passages, written by Sir Richard Steele, said " I am just come from visiting Sappho, a fine lady, who writes verses, sings, dances, and can say and do whatever she pleases, without the imputation of anything that can injure her character; for she is so well known to have no passion but self-love; or folly, but affectation; that now, upon any occasion, they only cry ' It is her way! ' and ' That is so like her! ' without farther reflection."

If Sappho had been anything more than a figment of Steele's imagination, the original could obviously not have been the daughter of a London tradesman and a girl of sixteen, as she would have been if the commonly accepted year of her birth as 1693 is correct, and it is but little more likely if we are right in putting her birth back three or four years earlier. It can have been but a haphazard guess of the editors of *The Tatler* when towards the close of the century they sought to identify Eliza Haywood with Steele's neatly etched-in lady. A very much better case is, as we have shown, to be made out for finding in Mary de la Rivière Manley, the original of the essayist's Sappho—her age, her gifts, her character, her vanity, and her known friendship with Steele all help to fit her for the part.

Certainly the ascription to Eliza Haywood may be dismissed. There is no direct evidence in favour of it, and that the circumstantial evidence is dead against it has regretfully to be admitted, for it would have afforded the earliest glimpse of her. It is true that in introducing one of her later works our author, after modestly saying " I never was

* No. 6, April 23, 1709, and No. 40, July 12, 1709.

a beauty," and complacently claiming " a genius tolerably extensive " went on to say how she had had an unusual education. Seeing that the work which she thus prefaced was *The Female Spectator,* it would have been irresistible, had she been the original of Steele's " Sappho " to have claimed that personal link with the original *Tatler.*

It was presumably in 1710 or early in 1711 that Eliza Haywood married. Such early records as we have, and the *D.N.B.,* say that she married a man named Haywood while still very young, and that he abandoned her after a brief married life, leaving her with two young children to look after. Thanks to Dr. Whicher's investigations we appear now to know who her husband was and that, whatever the reason may have been, it was she who did the abandoning!

The when and the where of the marriage are still undetermined and the earliest evidence of it which we have is in the register of the City church of St. Mary Aldermary, where it is recorded that on December 3, 1711, Charles, son of Valentine Haywood, clerk in holy orders, and Elizabeth his wife, was christened. Dr. Whicher says that the Rev. Valentine Haywood was " at least fifteen years older than his spouse." Though it seems probable that the Elizabeth wife of Valentine Haywood was the Eliza Haywood in whom we are interested, it must be admitted that there appear some difficulties in the way of accepting her as such; it seems somehow less certain than that our Eliza Haywood was the daughter of Robert Fowler who was christened in 1689.

The very next definitely stated item of biographical fact as generally accepted is that Eliza Haywood acted for a time in Dublin during 1715, appearing in the Smock Alley Theatre as Chloe in Shadwell's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens.* Seeing the relations of church and stage at the time it is difficult to believe in the wife of the city clergyman having turned actress, unless it was that the marriage had already proved unhappy and Eliza had left

her husband and was seeking to earn a livelihood in the one way open to a woman so circumstanced at such a time. If that were so it may have been something of a temporary escapade, and domestic peace of a kind must have been patched up for a time later.

IV

It may be accepted that when Eliza Haywood first turned author she was still living with her husband. It is said in some of the old vaguely written memoirs that while yet young she had "dabbled in dramatic poetry," but the earliest work of hers that is known was published in 1719 when she must have been nearly thirty years of age. It was in that year also that her husband published *An Examination of Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine, with a confutation of it,* from the title-page of which we gather the only contemporary particulars of its author who is described as "Valentine Haywood, M.A., formerly Fellow of St. John Baptist's College in Oxford, and now Rector of Bodham near Holt in Norfolk, and Lecturer of St. Matthew's, Friday Street, London." Mrs. Haywood's first essay in fiction, *Love in Excess,* was so successful that she promptly followed it up with a second part, and early in the following year with a third, so that Eliza Haywood may be regarded as a pioneer in the three-volume novel. This tripartite form of publication was followed with other of her romances. It may be said that the first part was published at one shilling and the others at two shillings apiece.

Whether the pioneer had to pay one of the penalties of pioneering by suffering in her domestic relations is not certain but may well be surmised. There *may* have been literary jealousy in the Haywood household! The husband had prepared a careful refutation of a work by an unorthodox divine who had already been condemned for it by Convocation—and probably but little was heard of his book; the wife had written a romance which had

so pleased the public that the gratified bookseller was soon suggesting the advisability of a second part. Some earlier trouble there may have been over Eliza's stage experience, though of the extent of that beyond the recorded appearance in Dublin we have no note, while of a later stage connection there are but vague hints. Dr. Whicher thinks that her first novel "showed evidences of her apprenticeship to the theatre," but, if she really was the wife of the Rev. Valentine Haywood, it may be doubted whether her connection with the theatre had been long enough to affect her attitude towards the story which she had to tell. Fiction in dramatic form preceded the novel in England, and it would seem more or less natural for writers to visualise their stories as a kind of stage-sequence of happenings. The clerical attitude towards the stage was such that it may well be believed that it was much the same towards the amorous "novels" which had won to a certain popularity since Aphra Behn, whose stories were still prominently in the bookseller's lists in the early decades of the 18th century, and it may be that their vogue led Eliza Haywood to the idea of concocting similarly romantic rhodomontades. Her clergyman-husband probably made professional protest against her new venture, and she in the flush of early literary success may have resented this.

Love in Excess is a romantic medley of amorous intrigues in which the Count D'Elmont is the central figure, if such a term may be used of so loosely-constructed and vaguely presented a narrative. The method of presentation is such highfalutin as may afford amusing reading for a page or two but becomes wearisome very soon where the pages run into their hundreds. Passion is at times torn to tatters in a way that becomes ludicrous, rather than moving as it was doubtless designed to be. Here is part of a scene in which the author seems to have "let herself go" in emphasising the dictum that Hell has no fury like a woman scorned:

"If the lady was agitated with an extremity of vexa-

tion at the Count's declaration of his passion for another, what was she now at this disappointment of the hopes she was so lately flattered with? Instead of making any direct reply to what he said, she raged, stamped, tore her hair, cursed Frankville, all mankind, the world, and in that height of fury scarce spared Heaven itself; but the violence of her pride and resentment being a little vented, love took his turn, again she wept, again she pressed his hand, nay, she even knelt, and hung upon his feet, as he would have broke from her; and begged him, with words as eloquent as wit could form, and desperate dying love suggest, to pity and relieve her misery. But he had now learned to dissemble his concern, lest it should a second time beguile her; and after raising her, with as careless and unmoved an air as he was capable of putting on; 'My presence, madam,' said he, 'but augments your disorder, and 'tis only by seeing you no more, that I am qualified to conduce to the recovery of your peace.' With these words he turned hastily from her and was going out of the room, when she, quick as thought, sprung from the place where she had stood, and being got between him and the door, and throwing herself into his arms, before he had time to prevent her; 'You must not, shall not go,' she cried, ''till you have left me dead.' 'Pardon me, madam,' answered he fretfully, and struggling to get loose from her embrace, 'to stay after the discovery you have made of your sentiments, were to be guilty of an injustice almost equal to yours, therefore I beg you would give me liberty to pass.' 'Hear me but speak,' resumed she, grasping him yet harder, 'return but for a moment—lovely barbarian—Hell has no tortures like your cruelty.' Here the different passions working in her soul, with such uncommon vehemence, hurried her spirits beyond what nature could support; her voice faltered in the accent, her trembling hands by slow degrees relinquished what so eagerly they had held, every sense forgot its use, and she sunk in all appearance lifeless on the floor. The Count

was, if possible, more glad to be released than grieved at the occasion, and contented himself with calling her women to her assistance, without staying to see when she would recover."

Despite the teaching of Addison and Steele, readers of the first quarter of the 18th century did not easily lose their taste for this riotous presentation of passion; for though the suggestion that it was what might be termed the lower reading classes in the social hierarchy of the time who applauded the new novelist and bought her work may be true, that it met with the applause of others also is certain. When Part II of *Love in Excess* followed close upon the appearance of Part I it was prefaced by laudatory verses from the pen of Richard Savage, to which we will return when dealing more fully with Eliza's relations with that unhappy poet. This story however moved two other writers, both unfortunately anonymous, to the writing of commendatory verses. One of these, "Verses wrote in the Blank Leaf of Mrs. Haywood's Novel," said:

"Of all the passions given us from above,
The noblest, truest, and the best, is love; . . .
'Tis love Eliza's first affections fires,
Eliza writes but love alone inspires;
'Tis love that gives D'Elmont his manly charms,
And tears Amena from her father's arms;
Relieves the fair-one from her maiden fear,
And gives Melliora all her soul holds dear,
A generous lover, and a bliss sincere."

The second poem deserves citation at full length, for its extravagance and the unconscious humour of one or two of its lines:

"A stranger Muse, an unbeliever too,
That women's souls such strength of vigour knew!
Nor less an atheist to Love's power declared,
Till *you* a champion of the sex appeared!

A convert now, to both, I feel that fire
Your words alone can paint! Your looks inspire!
Resistless now, Love's shafts new pointed fly,
Winged with your flame, and blazing in your eye,
With sweet, but powerful force, the charm-shot heart
Receives th' impression of the conqu'ring dart,
And ev'ry art'ry hugs the joy-tipt smart!
No more of Phœbus rising vainly boast,
Ye tawny sons of a luxuriant coast!
While our blest isle is with such rays replete,
Britain shall glow with more than Eastern heat!"

In February, 1720, the third and completing part of *Love in Excess* was published, the romance having met with a success which must have been gratifying indeed to the woman starting author. A letter to an unknown correspondent preserved among the State Papers of the period suggests that she had, either as actress or playwright, been making attempts on the theatre. This letter, dated "August ye 5th, 1720" runs as follows:

"Sir, The stage not answering my expectation, and the averseness of my relations to it, has made me turn my genius another way; I have printed some little things which have met a better reception than they deserved, or I expected: I have now ventured on a translation to be done by subscription, the proposals whereof I take the liberty to send you: I have been so much used to receive favours from you that I can make no doubt of your forgiveness for this freedom, great as it is, and that you will also become one of those persons, whose names are a countenance to my undertaking. I am mistress of neither words nor happy turn of thought to thank you as I ought for the many unmerited favours you have conferred on me, but beg you to believe all that a grateful soul can feel, mine does who am Sir, your most humble and most obedient Servant, Eliza Haywood."

The letter thus mysteriously recording the breaking of

a connection with the stage of which we have no particulars enclosed a paper of " proposals for printing by subscription a translation from the French of the famous Monsieur Boursault containing ten letters from a Lady of Quality to a Chevalier."

This translation was duly published (see p. 215), but before then the relations between Eliza Haywood and her husband had reached breaking point, and she departed from her home. Six weeks later there appeared in *The Post Boy* (Jan. 7, 1721) the following advertisement:

" Whereas Elizabeth Haywood, wife of the Reverend Mr. Valentine Haywood, eloped from him her husband on Saturday the 26th of November last past, and went away without his knowledge and consent: This is to give notice to all persons in general, that if anyone shall trust her either with money or goods, or if she shall contract debts of any kind whatsoever, the said Mr. Haywood will not pay the same."

From this advertisement we learn that instead of being deserted by her husband Eliza Haywood had done the deserting; the term used, by the way, that she had " eloped " suggests from common usage that she had gone off with a lover, and that such was the contemporary impression if not the fact may be gathered from the scandal about her in which Pope found venom for his satire a few years later.

Although it is unsafe to read autobiographical revelations into works of fiction, it appears to us at least possible that when, many years later, Eliza Haywood wrote her two familiar treatises on the manner in which *The Wife* and *The Husband* should regulate their conduct, she recalled the trouble on which her own domestic life had come to an end. She speaks of having been eyewitness of a quarrel between husband and wife in circumstances in which the presence of a third person was unlikely. The husband ordered that the arrangement of their bedchamber should be changed, the wife said that the re-

arrangement would be impossibly awkward and declined to have it done, only to be met with " the best quality a wife can be possessed of is her obedience to the commands of her husband; and you ought to have known that after marriage it would not be your province to dispute, but to submit to whatever I should think fit to enjoin."

That we are told was the first " but not the last quarrel which the unhappy pair had on the subject of that superiority so stiffly asserted by the one and so resolutely denied by the other. Their life together was an almost continual scene of dissension, till tired with the tyranny of a husband, she flew to the embraces of a lover, with whom she went to Paris and still resides there."

In the stiffness of the husband, the resoluteness of the wife, it is likely that Mrs. Haywood was reporting one of the causes of the failure of her own marriage. Hers was very evidently not the temperament to put up with an obstinate insistence upon unreasonable obedience, while a clerical husband some fifteen years older than herself was quite likely to be such a stickler for his position of absolute mastership as she indicates.

That there were episodes in her earlier life which Mrs. Haywood did not wish recalled is certain, and it is at least likely that she was not unwilling that the idea that her husband had deserted her should be accepted. According to Baker's *Biographia Dramatica,* she was averse from her detailed life story being told " from a supposition of some improper liberties being taken with her character after death by the intermixture of truth and falsehood with her history, she laid a solemn injunction on a person who was well acquainted with all the particulars of it, not to communicate to anyone the least circumstance relating to her; so that probably, unless some very ample account should appear from that quarter itself, whereby her story may be placed in a true and favourable light, the world will still be left in the dark with regard to it."

She had herself, when seeking to indicate her fitness

for the rôle of *Female Spectator* in the years of her maturity said "My life, for some years, was a continued round of what I then called pleasure, and my whole time engrossed by a hurry of promiscuous diversions." That reference may of course be to the years before her marriage —they do not seem to "fit in" with the life of a clergyman's wife either in a Norfolk parish or in the City of London—but it may also be a euphemistic way of glancing at the years following immediately on her "elopement." Then, too, we know that in a private letter to Edmund Curll, which that notorious publisher did not scruple to print when he thought it might serve his turn, Eliza spoke of "the little inadvertencies of my own life," and again the euphemism suggests things of which there is no evidence. Apart from the scandals which were made an excuse for including Eliza Haywood in the *Dunciad* some years later we have no particulars of her gallantries, no association of her with any lover with whom the "elopement" of November 26, 1720, could have been carried out; although there are "scandal" hints of her association with a peer or a poet and a publisher. As we shall see later she *may* have been associated with a poet in the person of Richard Savage, and there is a bare hint in one of her dedications that she may have been under the protection of the first Viscount Gage.

V

With the advertisement in *The Post Boy* we have to take leave of Eliza Haywood's husband, and follow her separate fortunes. Whether or not she was leading a gay life we cannot say, that she had to provide for herself and two small children we are told, but the paternity of those children is matter of dispute, and if one of them was the Charles of whose christening we have evidence he must at the time of the elopement have been a boy of ten, but if

the scandal be true Eliza may have left that boy with the deserted husband and the " two babes of love " of whom we have yet to learn have been those " little inadvertencies " which the author admitted in her letter to Curll, and be what we might term post-elopement incidents. The lady's desire that authoritative light should not be cast on her life has possibly led to worse being believed of her than was actually the case!

The prompt success of *Love in Excess* had sufficed to enslave its author to those " three fiends, pen, ink and paper," and in the year in which she published the completion of that rambling record of random love-making and intrigue she also completed what she termed a paraphrase rather than a translation from the French in *Letters from a Lady of Quality to a Chevalier** with a long discourse concerning writings of this nature in the course of which she slightly misquoted James Howell in:

" The pen can furrow a fond female's heart,
And pierce it more than Cupid's talked-of dart:
Letters a kind of magic virtue have
And, like strong philtres, human souls enslave."

So the unfortunate lady who wrote the letters, said Mrs. Haywood, " divided between excess of love, and nicety of honour, could neither resolve to give a loose to the one, nor entirely obey the precepts of the other, but suffered herself to be tossed alternately by both. And though the person she loved was most certainly (if such a thing can be) deserving all the condescensions a woman could make, by his assiduity, constancy and gratitude, yet it must be a good while before she could receive those proofs; and the disquiets she suffered in that time of probation, were, I think, if no worse ensued, too dear a price for the pleasure

* *Lettres Nouvelles de Monsieur Boursault . . . avec Treize Lettres Amoureuses d'une Dame à un Cavalier.*

of being beloved by the most engaging and most charming of his sex."

From amorous romance to translation or adaptation, and from that to drama Eliza Haywood appears to have passed with something of easy confidence. Her pen output during the first decade of her career as a writer was perhaps more amazing for its quantity than for anything else, though it certainly suggests that she not only had the pen of a ready writer but that the work which she produced was bought by the public—and therefore found ready acceptance at the hands of the booksellers. For some thirty-six years she occupied the position of a leading woman writer of the time, and during the first ten years of that period it is probable that more than half of her considerable output was written and published.

We do not propose to deal in detail with her varied writings, though some of them will call for more particular mention, and for this purpose it will perhaps be best to group them roughly in two or three classes.

VI

It seemed inevitable that a writer of the early 18th century should seek something of the quick success that was sometimes to be had from the theatre, and though Eliza Haywood's method of rambling romance that had been exemplified in *Love in Excess* scarcely suggested dramatic promise, she was entrusted with the re-writing of a tragedy which John Rich, the manager of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre had by him. This was *The Fair Captive* which was duly produced March 4, 1721, with an epilogue by Aaron Hill, but only ran for four nights, thus giving the author the proceeds of a single night as her reward.

It is surprising to think that even for one night an audience could sit out a play of such appalling flatness of dialogue, such unbelievably poor attempts at blank verse. Here is the opening speech:

" After the toils of a long dangerous voyage,
Safely, at last, we've reached Constantinople:
And sure, methinks, my Pedro, 'tis most hard,
This heavenly clime, this Earthly Paradise,
This beauteous mistress of the Eastern world,
Should drag the chains of arbitrary power.
Spite of her pomp, she drooping, still laments
Her ravished freedom, and her lost estate:
Her spices, gums, her odours, wines and oil,
With all the joys luxuriant nature pours
Upon her head, seem quite unknown or tasteless;
Has the least share herself of her own blessings,
And like a miser pines in her own plenty."

It is difficult to believe that the man who speaks thus has just arrived at Constantinople to rescue his loved Isabella, " the fair captive," from the Turk, and if the final dialogue of the tragedy is more diverting it is not precisely in the way the tragic dramatist intended. Alphonso and Isabella are escaping, when

" Enter Achmat, Ozmin, Vizier wounded.

Achmat. Brave Christian, I rejoice to see thee safe,
Behold thy cruel foe expires before thee.
Soon a cold lump of lifeless clay will be
All the remains of this once mighty man!

Vizier. Insult me not, my latest pangs are on me,
A moment hence, and I despise your malice.
But I regret my disappointment there,
More than these wounds: had I possessed that maid,
I had ransacked all the joys that life could give,
And would have smiled at death. O Isabella,
Pity me, and from that rigid virtue which thou bearst
Recede a little and vouchsafe thy hand.
Not that—nay, then, I'm lost indeed. Farewell.
[*Dies.*

Alphonso. How vain is pomp! and how uncertain fate,
Unhappy man! a mean untimely death
Has closed thy scene of life: but say, ye just avengers!
What doom must Haly bear, that faithless slave?
Ozmin. He is impaled before the Palace gates,
His bones all crushed, and starting through his skin.
The traitor now twines on the bloody stake:
But Christian, 'tis convenient for thy safety,
That thou depart before the Sultan comes.
The guards shall be your convoy to your vessel.
Alphonso. Thanks, noble Ozmin! Now, my Isabella,
Thy virtue cleared shines with a double radiance.
Love and ambition are passions suited
To the brave alone, and find no entrance
In a narrow mind, yet when let loose to rage
And unrestrained by honour's nicer bounds
Degenerate into crimes and kill our fame."

Much in the piece might have given Martinus Scriblerus illustrations for his disquisition on the art of sinking in poetry—if it had ever attained a height from which sinking was possible. Yet a "run" of three nights justified the printing of the play, and as a consequence perhaps of the popularity of its author's novels it reached a second edition.

In the dedication of *The Fair Captive* to Lord Viscount Gage Eliza hints at the fact of her writing from necessity, and, as a consequence, on the value of a patron: "the noblest performances stand in need of more than their own merit to support 'em; and the most celebrated authors, I mean of those whose *Muse* is their *dependence,* are obliged to seek the protection of some powerful name.

"But how melancholy a reflection must this be, to a person who has neither merit to deserve, nor good-fortune to obtain the favour of a patron illustrious enough to disappoint the efforts of ill-nature? For my own part, who, I confess, have little pretences to the one, and never had

much reason to rely on the latter; I suffered all that that apprehension could inflict, and found that I wanted many more arguments than the little philosophy I am mistress of could furnish me with, to enable me to stem that tide of raillery which all of my sex, unless they are very excellent indeed, must expect when once they exchange the needle for the quill.

" It was in this condition your Lordship's pity found me; and by an excess of goodness, taught me that those very misfortunes which would bar the gates of favour against my hopes, addressed to those of a less elevated mind, were pleas sufficient to introduce me here."

There appears to be a possible hint in the last paragraph of Lord Gage having earlier befriended the young author.

In addition to the dedicatory epistle the author also wrote a curiously frank address to the reader in which she hinted that her task had been hopeless from the first, and disclaimed responsibility. Yet in the prologue it was duly described as her work and when her *Works* were collected the tragedy was included among them. In the address to the reader she explained that " this tragedy was originally writ by Captain Hurst, and by him delivered to Mr. Rich, to be acted soon after the opening of the New House [some six years earlier]; but the season being a little too far elapsed for the bringing it on then, and the author obliged to leave the kingdom, Mr. Rich became the purchaser of it, and the winter following ordered it into rehearsal: but found it so unfit for representation that for a long time he laid aside all thoughts of making anything of it, till last January he gave me the history of his bargain, and made me some proposals concerning the new modelling it: but, however I was prevailed upon, I cannot say my inclination had much share in my consent."

Why the manager should have been so insistent on claiming the services of the untried playwright it is not easy to guess, but in a few weeks Eliza succeeded in doing the remodelling, though she said that she found much more

to do than she had anticipated, "every character I was obliged to find employment for, introduce one entirely new, without which it had been impossible to have guessed at the design of the play; and in fine, change the diction so wholly, that, excepting in the parts of Alphonso and Isabella, there remains not twenty lines of the original."

The play itself, an Oriental imbroglio without either dramatic or literary distinction, need not detain us beyond that introduction, which is interesting as an example of naïvete on the part of the writer—and also as indicating a certain lack of humour in her make-up.

Eliza returned for a time to the writing of romances, but that she was not to be deterred by a single dramatic failure was seen when on August 12, 1723, a comedy from her pen, *A Wife to be Let,* was produced at Drury Lane, and had it is said a "middling success" being presented three times. What success the piece had was thought to be due to the fact that the author appeared in one of the principal characters, and the consequent curiosity of the public, but, though not more than indifferent, the comedy is far superior to the earlier essay in tragedy. It is recorded that Eliza Haywood only acted in the play owing to the indisposition of the actress who should have taken the part of Mrs. Graspall, yet the Prologue, which was spoken by Theophilus Cibber, rather suggests that it may have been no last minute mischance which led to the author creating the part:

"Critics! be dumb to-night—no skill display;
A dangerous woman-poet wrote the play:
One, who not fears your fury, though prevailing,
More than your match, in everything but railing.
Give her fair quarter, and whene'er she tries ye
Safe in superior spirit, she defies ye:
Measure her force, by her known novels, writ
With manly vigour, and with woman's wit.
Then tremble, and depend, if ye beset her,
She, who can talk so well, may act yet better."

The curious convention by which the writer of a play was regarded as a poet we have noted before, but really Eliza Haywood was no "dangerous woman poet" and in this prose comedy for the stage she proved no more successful than she had in tragedy. She won to that third performance on which it would seem the initial rewards of a dramatic author depended, and there an end. Her somewhat rambling and involved method of narration became impossible when rendered in supposedly dramatic form, and as actress and dramatist it is to be feared that she must have suffered a double disappointment by the want of success that attended her essay in comedy. The part which she took, that of Mrs. Graspall, is the wife of a miserly scoundrel who is quite willing to "let her"—at a price! The central theme is so distasteful that it is not surprising that the play failed of popular approval.

Though again she turned to novel writing and to the exploiting of the *chroniques scandaleuses* in which the generation appears to have delighted, she was still hankering after the theatre, yet nearly six years elapsed before she again made a bid for dramatic success—only to fail yet once again. She turned once more to tragedy and her *Frederick, Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburgh* ("Phoebus, what a name!") was duly produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields on March 4, 1729, and somehow, it is difficult to realise it on reading the piece to-day, managed to "run" for three performances, when as Dr. Whicher says it "fully deserved the deep damnation of its taking off." Eliza, who had it seems thought to win Royal patronage for her play—complained on publishing the piece that it "was the only new performance this season which had not received a sanction from some of that illustrious line"; but despite the dedication to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and various compliments to him implicit in the tragedy itself, she seems to have caught nothing by her angling for royal patronage. It may well be thought that the abominable exposure of her in Pope's *Dunciad* was too recent to make

royal recognition of her play and her homage in any way possible.

That was Eliza Haywood's last attempt, at least in the grand manner, to gain cash or kudos from writing for the stage. In the following year she made one more brief attempt as an actress when she appeared as Briseis, Achilles' captive " princess," at the Haymarket Theatre, in a tragedy by a friend, William Hatchett, *The Rival Father; or, the Death of Achilles.* Three years later she was associated with Hatchett in *The Opera of Operas; or, Tom Thumb the Great,* which was also produced at the Haymarket, but their work in the piece appears to have been very slight, for it is said to have been nothing more than Henry Fielding's *Tragedy of Tragedies* " transformed into an opera, by converting some passages of it into songs, and setting the whole to music." This piece was produced on May 31, 1733, and was so successful as to be given about a dozen times, with the fascinating Kitty Clive as one of the leading characters. Towards the close of the year another performance of it was given at Drury Lane. This was Eliza Haywood's last attempt at the acquisition of theatrical fame—and it is perhaps sad evidence of the undramatic quality of her talents that the most successful of her stage essays was that one in which least originality can have been demonstrated. It is obvious that little was put into *The Opera of Operas* that had not already been found in Fielding's original, which, according to Letitia Pilkington, was the cause of laughter from Jonathan Swift on one of the only two occasions on which as he averred he ever did laugh! Eliza Haywood and her actor friend appear to have profited by that easy adaptation of a successful piece which the easy state of the copyright law made permissible if not altogether commendable.

VII

Although during the first dozen years of her authorship Mrs. Haywood had from time to time sought to get a

footing in the more profitable field of writing represented by the theatres, she did not do so to the neglecting of that talent for fiction which she had displayed and by which she had won applause. During the period indicated in which occasional attacks had been made on the theatre she had been writing her amorous romances with an unceasingly active pen, and a ready imagination reinforced by dipping into those foreign sources of fiction much exploited in the days when English fiction was still in the early stages of its formation.

Between the first triumphant success scored with *Love in Excess* and the serious check to her popularity caused by the indecent attack on her by Alexander Pope, there was something like a constant stream of romantic fiction, of translations and of excursions into that field first staked out by Mrs. Manley, which must have made the name of Eliza Haywood that of one of the most familiar writers of the time. Apart from the " Secret Histories," to be touched upon later, a few poems, the collections of her " Works," and the translations, the indefatigable writer issued about thirty romances, etc., between the spring of 1722 and the publication of Pope's *Dunciad* in May, 1728.

Seeing that many of the stories were issued as closely printed pamphlets—rather than volumes as now understood—at one, two, or even three shillings apiece, the amount received by the author for each cannot have been large, so that it was essential that one whose livelihood depended on such should be a rapid worker. It is true that in addition to the amount received from the bookseller the writer could hope in some cases to get from a patron some financial recompense for a fulsome dedication. In the case of translated *Letters from a Lady of Quality to a Chevalier,* which appears to have been her only attempt at publication by subscription—Eliza Haywood, at the time of writing the letter already quoted had got 309 names on her list for a work that was to be issued at three shillings unbound—which would represent something less than fifty

pounds for the printer, the bookseller and the author. It is probable that in the case of many of these publications the number of copies issued did not exceed a thousand—from which it may be gathered that constant activity was necessary for maintaining anything in the nature of an income, and that the potential present from a flattered dedicatee became an important part of the rewards of authorship. Dr. Whicher says that "Mrs. Haywood evidently expected and sometimes received a guinea or so in return for a dedication," but it may be surmised that he put the cost of patronage far too low. We know that for some of her play-dedications Mrs. Centlivre received as much as twenty or even forty guineas, and it may be believed that in the case of the romancers the reward was sometimes as much as six or eight guineas—though at times the lavish laudation of the dedicatee proved wholly unproductive.

Whatever the rewards of authorship at the time, Eliza Haywood carried on her work with commendable energy; indeed the surprising energy which we noted in the last two or three years of Aphra Behn's life is small compared with that of this the most fecund of her followers.

Even as the stock "plot" of a large proportion of the comedies of the post-Restoration period was based in some variant of the theme in which the heroine and her lover have to contend against her father's decision that she shall marry the man of *his* choice, who is generally elderly or a mere dull master of money-bags, so in the fiction of the early Georgian period a constant theme was that of the confiding frailty of the female and the lustful lasciviousness, fickleness and faithlessness of the male. Thus it is that all too many of these early stories of Eliza Haywood's are but varied excursions in sensational sentiment, variations of the romance of passion, in which the women are often victimised by the men, and the record is set forth in terms of objective sensationalism, in extravagant phrasing about things said, done and felt, rather than in any revelation of character or actual feeling. Not always, however, is the

ELIZA HAYWOOD

From an engraving by G. Vertue, after a painting by J. Parmentier

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victim of man's passions an unwilling victim, for in one of these romances, *Fantomina,* we have the story of a lady's infatuation for a young man. She goes to the theatre masked as a common woman of the town—and is unable to escape the consequences of her exploit. Later, learning that he is to visit Bath, she gets a position as a servant, Celia, at his lodgings—and he is newly fascinated; then, disguised as the young "Widow Bloomer," she manages to get picked-up by him on his drive to London, and later as "Incognita" wins his wandering affections yet once again! Fiction has not yet broken away from the deadening unreality of the nomenclature fastened on it by the writers of the interminable French romances: Cleormina and Cleomelia, Philenia and Fillamour, Myrtano and Melliora—the very names are antithetic to anything like reality, they represent figures about whom we read, not individuals with whom we can sympathise. Whether romances or secret histories, or letters, be the nominal form in which it is put forth, there is so much of similarity among many of her voluminous productions that it is unnecessary, as it would assuredly be tedious to go through the rapid succession of publications that marked what may be termed her first productive period, though some of them must call for particular mention. More especially will it be necessary to touch upon those *Secret Histories* by which she is most frequently recalled, though they were but little differentiated from the passionate romances.

Five years after the publication of her first novel Mrs. Haywood had written so much, and her writings had been so welcomed that the booksellers found it worth while issuing her *Works* in four goodly volumes, and indeed by 1724 it would seem that she had attained a position equal to that of the "best sellers" of our day. One of the latest of her novels to be published before the collected edition was *Lasselia; or, the Self-Abandoned,* the page of which facing the title page contains a list of half a dozen of the "Novels, etc., writ by Mrs. Eliza Haywood."

1. Love in Excess, or the Fatal Enquiry; a Novel. In Three Parts. The Fourth Edition, Corrected.

—In vain from Fate we fly,
For first or last, as all must die,
So 'tis as much decreed above,
That first, or last, we all must love.—Lansdowne.

2. The British Recluse; or the Secret History of Cleomira, supposed dead: A Novel. The Second Edition.

Women are governed by a stubborn fate;
Their love's insuperable, as their hate!
No merit their aversion can remove,
Nor ill-requital can efface their love.—Waller.

3. The Injured Husband; or, the Mistaken Resentment: A Novel.

Short are the triumphs of the face alone:
Where conduct fails, how tott'ring is the throne!
Without this virtue, woman's weakly crowned:
Our minds fix government, our eyes but found.—
Dryden.

4. Idalia: or, the Unfortunate Mistress. A Novel. In Three Parts.

Under how hard a fate are women born!
Prized to their ruin, or exposed to scorn:
If we want beauty, we of love despair;
And are besieged, like frontier-towns, if fair.—
Waller.

The other two are the *Letters from a Lady of Quality to a Chevalier*, and *A Wife to be Let,* to neither of which is attached a motto. Those mottoes, by the way, were very happily found—so happily at times that it might be thought that the author sought inspiration in suggestive lines of the poets of the Restoration.

The title of the last of the four romances mentioned in the just quoted list is interesting, for it was used again as a title for a novel about a century and a half later, and curiously enough, by a writer whom Sir Edmund Gosse by implication described as the Eliza Haywood of the Vic-

torian era. The *Idalia* of Mrs. Haywood and the *Idalia* of "Ouida" have nothing beyond their title in common, but the former has another interest in that it appears to have suggested to Daniel Defoe one of the best known of his books. Mrs. Haywood's story of *Idalia; or, the Unfortunate Mistress,* was published in 1723 and in the following year Defoe brought out his story (now generally known as *Roxana*) *The Fortunate Mistress*—it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the writer of the later was consciously founding on the title of the earlier volume. Though both were dealing with the theme of a "mistress" who knew several "protectors," while *Idalia* is the story of a weak victim of man's passion presented in a highly romantic fashion, *Roxana's* story, autobiographically rendered in Defoe's straightforward naturalistic fashion, is the record of a woman who frankly expounded her reasons for preferring the position of a mistress to that of a wife. Something of a mystery links their names in another connection. In 1720 was published Defoe's *History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell,* the deaf and dumb fortune-teller, and in it the author hinted at a "little pocket volume" shortly to be published in which would be given a selection of the letters that had passed between Duncan Campbell and his correspondents. Not until 1724 was such a book issued, with the elaborately descriptive title *A Spy Upon the Conjurer: or, a Collection of Surprising Stories, with Names, Places and Particular Circumstances relating to Mr. Duncan Campbell, commonly known by the Name of the Deaf and Dumb Man; and the astonishing Penetration and Event of his Predictions. Written to my Lord —— by a Lady, who for more than Twenty Years past has made it her Business to Observe all Transactions in the Life and Conversation of Mr. Campbell.* This work was issued with four separate title pages during 1724, and on three of those title pages the work is described as "revised by Mrs. Eliza Haywood." Yet several writers on Defoe credit this second work also to that voluminous author, but as

Dr. Whicher pertinently points out the whole character of it, and of the many amorous stories included, are in Eliza Haywood's vein, and not a bit in that of Defoe. It is true that Dr. Whicher regards her as developing the clue afforded by the earlier announcement of a pocket volume and "composing" the epistles which make up the collection. He appears, however, to have overlooked the fact that what is regarded as the first edition of the work bore the imprint "Sold by Mr. Campbell at the Green Hatch in Buckingham Court, Whitehall." This at least suggests that Eliza Haywood may have had actual letters received by Duncan Campbell as basis for her work, though she doubtless duly romanticised them for her purpose, and the large batch of letters included suggests that this may be the case. Mr. T. F. Henderson, in writing on Campbell in the *D.N.B.*, admits that "the pamphlet has been attributed to Eliza Haywood"—which is a mild recognition of the fact that three out of the four original title pages bear her name—and adds "but there is every reason to suppose that the real author was Defoe, Campbell supplying him with the necessary information. About a third of the pamphlet consists of letters—generally very amusing, sometimes of the most extraordinary character—written by Campbell's correspondents." Sir Sidney Lee, also in the *D.N.B.* (in the article on Eliza Haywood), says, "This work has been wrongly claimed for Defoe. It was doubtless concocted wholly by Mrs. Haywood." Who shall decide when—the *Dictionary of National Biography* disagrees with itself?

A year after *A Spy Upon the Conjurer* was published a sixpenny pamphlet *The Dumb Projector: Being a Surprizing Account of a Trip to Holland made by Mrs. Duncan Campbell,* and the author of this was unquestionably the author of the *Spy*.

In 1730 Campbell died, and as he had been a prominent "character" for many years, it was inevitable that his

memoirs should be published, and in 1732 there duly appeared *Secret Memoirs of the late Mr. Duncan Campbell, The Famous Deaf and Dumb Gentleman. Written by Himself, who ordered they should be published after his decease.* It seems quite likely that this work was begun by Daniel Defoe, and that he dying before it was completed, the completion was left to Eliza Haywood. Dr. Whicher, who appears first to have put forth this theory, shows a good deal of evidence in favour of it. It is from a casual remark in those *Secret Memoirs* that we learn of some of Duncan Campbell's friends who visited him at his homes either (1720) in Exeter Court, Strand, or later in Buckingham Court, where he must have been a close neighbour of Susanna Centlivre:

"Sometimes, when surrounded by my friends, such as Anthony Hammond, Esq., Mr. Philip Horneck, Mr. Philips, Mr. ——, Mrs. Centlivre, Mrs. Fowk, Mrs. Eliza Haywood, and other celebrated wits, of which my house, for some years, has been the general rendezvous, a good bowl of punch before me, and the glass going round in a constant circle of mirth and good humour, I have, in a moment, beheld sights which has frozen my very blood, and put me into agonies that disordered the whole company."

Though that is written in the first person, it was doubtless part of the make-believe of the compiler, for it is extremely unlikely that Duncan Campbell had himself penned any part of the work. It is interesting to find Eliza Haywood and Daniel Defoe writing on the same theme, for their methods and interests differed widely—"when she was not a scandal-monger she was a sentimentalist"—yet for sheer energy and continuous production of books and pamphlets over a long period of years she, more than any other writer of the 18th century, is qualified to be known as the female Defoe.

VIII

Although it may be something of an arbitrary distinction to differentiate what may be described as the "secret memoirs" from Eliza Haywood's other essays in amorous romance, it is not wholly so. In one respect the secret memoir may indeed be regarded as the first fumbling step towards realism in fiction. The old classic and romantic names for the protagonists of passion were getting a little monotonous, and it is not surprising to find that Mrs. Haywood early turned her attention to that particular branch in which Mrs. Manley had been the pioneer in England twenty years earlier, indeed some of her mere romances had in them the hint that they were the masking of actualities in the conventions of romance even before she had definitely turned to the devising of secret memoirs.

Even as Mary Manley had borrowed the title of her unknown realm of Atalantis from an earlier and greater writer (Bacon's *New Atlantis*), so Eliza Haywood when she sought for a fictional disguise-name for the England of her time went back to another earlier writer, and so gave seeming vraisemblance to her imaginary state by borrowing the title of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia,* while from Mrs. Manley she borrowed the idea of a supernatural visitor for the purpose of making her masked revelations of contemporary scandals. When her first essay of this kind came out, in two volumes, 1724-25, it was entitled *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia,* and described as having been "written by a celebrated author of that country. Now translated into English." Though the characters that play their parts in the wearisome succession of scandals and intrigues are still given those artificial names which seem to make them things written about rather than individuals revealed, yet the addition of a "key" provided at least a hint of actual people being disguised beneath such cumbersome nomenclature as Orainos, Saloida or Flirtil-

laria. We are little impressed on being told of a certain Marama that age was the smallest of her imperfections, that "she is of a disposition so perverse and peevish, so designing, mercenary, proud, cruel and revengeful, that it has been matter of debate, if she were really woman, or if some fiend had not assumed that shape on purpose to affront the sex, and fright mankind from marriage." Yet when we learn that Marama is but a disguise-name masking the personality of Sarah, Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, quite another impression is received even now—and it must have been more markedly so in the days when the secret memoirs were supposed revelations concerning the lives and characters of living people. It was the piquancy of personal allusions that gave such works their vogue, for though it might be expected that they were compiled on the method of a little bit invented and a big bit inferred, there was probably at the back of the reader's mind the impression that there must have been at least some foundation for the stories told.

Between publishing the first and second volumes of the *Memoirs of a Certain Island,* Mrs. Haywood prepared from various authors, and published as "translated from the French," *Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots: Being the Secret History of Her Life, and the Real Causes of all her Misfortunes. Containing a Revelation of many particular Transactions in her Reign; never yet published in any Collection.* This was a fairly large volume but has no special value, being but a blending of hastily compiled historical facts with hastily written merely imaginative love scenes, rushed out it would seem to compete with a similar work issued by other booksellers. It has been described as being that one of the author's works most truly entitled to the description of secret memoirs—it was also probably that one which made the slightest popular appeal. Mary Queen of Scots had been nearly a century and a half dead, and that public interest was more readily to be aroused by talk about the living was made plain to Mrs. Haywood by the

reception accorded to her next essay in the genre of satiric history. This, *The Secret History of the Present Intrigues of the Court of Caramania,** is one of the best remembered of her writings. Less loosely constructed than the mixture of scandals which had made up the earlier work, this one had comparative unity in that it was concerned for the most part with the amours and intrigues of Theodore, Prince of Caramania, with certain beauties of his Court, and the similar exploits of those who were about him. The central theme running through the whole "history" is the liaison of Theodore with Ismonda—and to the readers of 1727 there could not be the slightest doubt as to whom it was those names were meant to mask. We have only been able to consult a second edition of the work, so cannot say if a "key" had been also provided with the first, but that key shows plainly enough that the "Dacia" and "Caramania" of the secret history, though allotted to Asia Minor, were really Hanover and England, and while indicating to the reader that Ismonda was Henrietta Howard (afterwards Countess of Suffolk), did not trouble to point out that Prince Theodore was the Prince of Wales—to become King George the Second shortly after the "Secret History" was first issued—and the Princess Hyanthe the Princess of Wales.

Although Eliza Haywood's name did not appear as author of either of these *romans au clef,* they both seem to have been early recognised as her work, and attributed to her. The daring of the scandal must have been realised, for not only was the author's name withheld, but no bookseller's names appeared as publishers, the work being vaguely described as printed "for the booksellers of London and Westminster." The statement has been made that the printer and some of the booksellers who dealt in the work were arrested, but there does not seem to be any

* Caramania is described as being a large and fertile province of Asia Minor. In romantic cartography it might be found neighbouring Ruritania.

evidence that they were; had they been it is difficult to see how the author should have escaped the clutches of the law, but as we shall see later it was possibly this work which led to her being given the unpleasant publicity of appearing as the "heroine" of *The Dunciad*.

On the whole the Caramanian volume is less rhodomantadish, less extravagant in style than the Utopian work; so much so that it might almost be doubted whether the same pen wrote both these "secret histories." It may be that the greater unity of theme led to the (comparatively) simpler literary method of expression in the later work, which however was promptly attributed to Eliza Haywood—and the attribution does not appear to have been contradicted. As it was this work which led to the literary pillorying of the writer for all time, a passage illustrating its daring method of dealing with Court matters may well be given.

The first meeting of Theodore and Ismonda is thus described: "That which crowned the feast and heightened every pleasure was the presence of the lovely Ismonda, wife to Adrastus.* The heart of Theodore, till now insensible of the power of beauty, felt a strange alteration at the sight of her, a mixture of delight and pain diffused itself through every glowing fibre, tumultuous thrillings filled the veins, and each warm artery confessed the new desire! Unskilled in love, and all unstudied in the god's approach, and by what means he steals himself into the unguarded soul, he knew not to what guest he had given room; and innocently, at first, indulged the growing anguish, nor thought what future pains might be the consequence of the present joy he found in gazing on so dangerous an object. So lost was he in the admiration of her charms, that had not Marmillio† (a Caramanian nobleman who from his childhood had been bred up with him, had ever been his greatest favourite, and had accompanied him to Anatolia and in this visit) reminded him that it grew late, he might possibly

* Charles Howard, afterwards Earl of Suffolk.
† The Earl of Scarborough.

have forgotten that decorum which is always observed between persons of short acquaintance, as was that he had with Adrastus, and by his long stay have occasioned some suspicions in him, which would have been of little advantage to the passion he had entertained.

" 'Tis certain that the discretion of Marmillio, who presently saw the condition of his prince, kept it from being perceivable by the husband; but the fair Occasion was too sensible of the force of her charms to be deceived in that manner; she both knew and triumphed in the conquest she had made; and though she had hitherto regarded her husband with more tenderness than is ordinarily found among wives of quality, yet the thought of being beloved by so great and so lovely a prince as Theodore, rousing all that was vain or ambitious in her soul, made her in very great danger of swerving from that duty, she had, till now, preserved with all imaginable strictness. She saw herself admired by him, was pleased with the discovery, endeavoured all she could to enhance the esteem she had inspired, and how near such a disposition is to betraying the heart, too many fine ladies by fatal experience can testify.

" Theodore, on the other side, was no sooner departed from the presence of his adored Ismonda, than he was convinced by the pain he was in, what sort of passion it was which he had entertained: that purling pleasure, which at her every little word or motion, ran trickling through his veins, was now succeeded by a heavy languor, that sprightly joy which so lately enlivened all his soul, the dear inspirer absent, gave way to a sullen gloom, and the once calm composure of his mind wholly changed to the reverse of what it had been."

Thanks to the passion of Theodore, the calculating ambition of Ismonda and the adroitness of Marmillio, the lady soon becomes the mistress of the prince, while the supposed devoted attendant on his wife Hyanthe,* and their amour is the recurrent theme running through the record

* Caroline, wife of George II.

of many amours. Then towards the close, when the "rash, amorous and ungovernable" prince had fallen a-languishing for the lovely Violetta, his passion for Ismonda began to cool, giving the author occasion for musing on a subject to which she reverted again and again:

"There is nothing more certain in the affairs of love, than that security is the parent of satiety; and if we in the least consult either philosophy or nature, 'tis easy to be accounted for. What a man fears to lose, he is for ever endeavouring to preserve; but when doubt is no more and you have no farther to do than to go on in one continued round, the most pleasing circle, in time grows dull, and the once ardent lover slackens in his race; the spirits cool, and desire begins to nod, when free from all interruptions in the way, and unalarmed by any pursuing fears. Besides, of the most luscious fruits we soonest surfeit: what is given us but sparingly would never fail to excite our keenest appetite; but when allowed at large, and the rapacious will is left without a check, with too much greediness we devour, and the rich sweets with too much plenty cloy. To all this may be added, that Ismonda buoying up ambition with fancied merit, and the plea of having now abandoned everything for love, was lost to all but the return of that dear ruinous passion; imprudently exacted from the prince as a right, that which is never with pleasure granted when expected—love should be free and unconfined as air; the least restraint destroys the bliss, changes its very nature and perverts that to forced complaisance, which was before all ecstasy and joy."

The amour on which this was based was familiar to all, and is a matter of history, but the episode with Violetta on which the *Secret History* closes is of the kind which makes it little surprising that there is a tradition that the printer and publisher suffered imprisonment. Theodore, despairing of otherwise gaining Violetta, is by a trick introduced into her room as an "Egyptian eunuch"—and wins by force what he had failed to gain by persuasion.

IX

Eliza Haywood's association with the mysterious, irresponsible, unhappy poet known to fame as Richard Savage (d. 1743) calls for special consideration. They appear to have become acquainted after the publication of the first part of *Love in Excess,* and before that of the second, for the latter was prefaced by complimentary verses wherein Savage sought to " paint the wonders of Eliza's praise " in such extravagant laudation as was the mode of the period:

" Thy prose in sweeter harmony refines,
Than numbers flowing through the Muse's lines;
What beauty ne'er could melt, thy touches fire,
And raise a music that can love inspire;
Soul-thrilling accents all our senses wound,
And strike with softness, whilst they charm with sound!
When thy Count pleads, what fair his suit can fly?
Or when thy nymph laments, what eyes are dry?
Ev'n Nature's self in sympathy appears,
Yields sigh for sigh, and melts in equal tears;
For such descriptions thus at once can prove
The force of language, and the sweets of love.
The myrtle's leaves with those of Fame entwine,
And all the glories of that wreath are thine.
As eagles can undazzled view the force
Of scorching Phœbus in his noon-day course,
Thy genius to the God its lustre plays,
Meets his fierce beams, and darts him rays for rays!
Oh! glorious strength! Let each succeeding page
Still boast those charms, and luminate the age;
So shall thy beamful fires with light divine,
Rise to the sphere, and there triumphant shine."

That was in 1720. In 1724 was published *The Rash Resolve,* and this again moved Richard Savage to the writ-

ing of complimentary verses, for the second edition of the novel, which followed hard on the first, included his fresh tribute to the author:

"Doomed to a fate, which damps the poet's flame,
A Muse, unfriended, greets thy rising name! . . .
Eliza, still impaint loves pow'rful Queen!
Let love, soft love, adorn each swelling scene.
Armed with keen wit, in Fame's wide lists advance!
Spain yields in fiction, in politeness, France.
Such Orient light, as the first poets knew,
Flames from thy thought, and brightens every view!
A strong, a glorious, a luxuriant fire,
Which warms cold wisdom into wild desire!
Thy fable glows so rich through every page,
What moral's force can the fierce heat assuage?"

At some time, and for some unascertained reason, between the publication of the second edition of *The Rash Resolve,* in 1724, with Richard Savage's laudation of its author, and the publication, in 1725, of *Memoirs of a Certain Island,* wherein Eliza Haywood included the romantic story of Savage's origin, relations between the poet and the novelist had entirely changed. Of the quarrel, if it is to be termed such, we have nothing more than Eliza's own hints in the *Memoirs,* and they indicate pretty plainly that there was a lady in the case. The account which she gives of the poet's origin is that for which he himself was responsible, and she embodies it in a sensational story of the amours of the couple whom he claimed as his parents, Anne Lady Macclesfield and Lord Rivers. The story of his parentage is that generally accepted since, though often with a note of doubt as to its accuracy. The fact that it was a current story may well suggest that other of the "Utopian" scandals chronicled in the *Memoirs* had a similar basis in the things said of the time, even if they had no more substantial foundations.

In writing of the story of "Young Riverius"—the name she gave to Savage from the title of his reputed father—Eliza Haywood so "let herself go" in slanging one of Savage's lady friends that it is difficult to avoid believing that personal pique or jealousy was its inspiration. Apparently Richard Savage had done something to Eliza's hurt, and she attributes this to the influence of a certain "big-boned, buxom, brown woman," one who pretends "to have an intimate acquaintance with the Muses—has judgment enough to know that *ease* and *please* make a rhyme, and to count ten syllables on her fingers. This is the stock with which she sets up for a wit, and among some ignorant wretches passes for such; but with people of true understanding, nothing affords more subject of ridicule, than that incoherent stuff which she calls verses. She bribed, with all the favours she is capable of conferring, a bookseller* (famous for publishing soft things) to print some of her works† on which she is not a little vain: though she might very well have spared herself the trouble. Few men of any rank whatsoever, but have been honoured with the receipt of some of her letters both in prose and measure—few coffee-houses but have been the repository of them."

There certainly is a touch of the vicious in some of the phrasing of that passage, while from a later one we get the impression that the big-boned, buxom, brown woman had inspired Riverius (Richard Savage) to do the unknown something to Eliza's hurt, for it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the "person" referred to at the close of the following extract was none other than Eliza Haywood herself:

"The monster whose soul is wholly composed of hypocrisy, envy and lust, can ill endure another woman should be esteemed mistress of those virtues she has acted with too barefaced an impudence to pretend to, and is never so happy as when by some horrid stratagem she finds the means to traduce and blast the character of the worthy. To assist a disposition therefore so near of kin, and so

* Edmund Curll. † *The Amours of Clio and Strephon*, 1719.

pleasing to the infernal potentate, a thousand busy fiends are always at her call to furnish mischief, and new point invention; but notwithstanding her propensity to malice, dissimulation, of which she is a perfect mistress, makes her not insensible that the surest way of hurting a reputation is to speak of it with an affected candour—nobody in conversation seems to have more softness and gentleness, she boasts of no good quality so much as good nature, and under that cover, whenever she does speak a severe thing against anyone, 'tis with the more ease believed; but it is but seldom she attempts it, 'tis enough for her to lay the scheme of mischief, the *executing* it she leaves to others, who, if detected, must bear the blame; while she perhaps shall be the first to condemn what she has been the sole occasion of. With how much readiness the easily deceived Riverius has obliged her in spreading those reports, coined in the hellish mint of her own brain, I am sorry to say; but as his adhering too much to the interest of so detestable a creature has been the only crime he has hitherto been guilty of, 'tis to be hoped his good sense will in a short time get the better of her infatuations. It cannot be doubted but that he has lost many friends on her account, in particular one there was who bore him a singular respect, though no other wise capacitated to serve him than by good wishes. This person received a more than common injury from him, through the instigations of that female fury; but yet continuing to acknowledge his good qualities, and pitying his falling into the contrary, took no other revenge than writing a little satire, which his having published some admirable things in the praise of friendship and honour, gave a handsome opportunity for."

Those closing words appear to indicate fairly conclusively that the lines *To the Ingenious Riverius, on his Writing in the Praise of Friendship* was the work of Mrs. Haywood herself. In it she sought to heap coals of fire on the offender's head:

"Thronged with the plaudits of a crowd of friends,
'Tis nobler pleasure when a foe commends:
When from my injured soul thy moving lays
Extort delight and force unwilling praise,
The world must own the justice of the theme,
And those thy folly wronged thy wit esteem."

The lady so fiercely denounced and vigorously trounced by Eliza Haywood has been identified by Dr. Whicher as Martha Fowke, who was addressed as "Clio" by several writers of the time, but who was assuredly not, as Dr. Whicher says, the "Mira" of Thomson. Eliza's attempt to keep in the good graces of Savage while addressing his "Clio" in her best Billingsgate, was of no avail—he was neither drawn back to her, nor drawn from her rival. In a satire, *The Authors of the Town* (1725), Savage attacked the former and he lauded the latter, for it is impossible to avoid the belief that the first part of the following is intended as a slap at Mrs. Haywood, while in the second her pet aversion is apostrophised by name:

"First, let me view what noxious nonsense reigns,
While yet I loiter on prosaic plains;
If pens impartial active annals trace,
Others, with secret hist'ry, truth deface:
Views and reviews, and wild Memoirs appear,
And slander darkens each recorded year. . . . .
A cast-off dame, who of intrigues can judge,
Writes scandal in romance—a printer's drudge!
Flushed with success, for stage-renown she pants,
And melts, and swills, and pens luxurious rants. . . .
Clio, descending angels sweep thy lyre,
Prompt thy soft lays, and breathe seraphic fire.
Tears fall, sighs rise, obedient to thy strains,
And the blood dances in the mazy veins! . . .
In social spirits, lead thy hours along,
Thou life of loveliness, thou soul of song!"

The degree of intimacy between Eliza Haywood and Richard Savage can only be guessed at to-day; that she was prepared to forgive and forget we may gather, but he seems to have pursued her after the break with something very like malice, and it may even be guessed that he was in some way responsible for the unenviable position of publicity into which she was thrust by the publication of Pope's *Dunciad,* in one of the "keys" to which it is even hinted that Richard Savage may have been the father of one of the "two babes of love" with which contemporary scandal credited her.

At some unascertained date Savage published a satire *On False Historians* in which he appears mainly to have been inspired with the desire of deriding his whilom friend, and was not above repeating himself:

"Sure of all plagues with which dull prose is curst,
Scandals, from false historians, spot the worst . . .
Materials, which belief in gazettes claim,
Loose-strung, run gingling into history's name.
Thick as Egyptian clouds of raining flies;
As thick as worms where man corrupting lies;
As pests obscene that haunt the ruined pile;
As monsters floundering in the muddy Nile;
Minutes, Memoirs, Views and Reviews appear,
Where slander darkens each recorded year. . . .
Thus slander popular, o'er truth prevails,
And easy minds imbibe romantic tales.
Thus, 'stead of history, such authors raise
Mere crude wild novels of bad hints for plays."

That Savage did not lessen his animus against Eliza Haywood is shown by the fact that in backing up Pope in his war against the "Dunces" he published in 1732 a scurrilous attack the animus of which is suggested by the fact that the very title was parodied from that of Eliza's

comedy, *An Author to be Let.* In this the poet attacked by name a number of the victims of the great satirist, blaming them for doing that which he himself was doing —earning a precarious living by their pens, instead of carrying on at the work of their fathers. Claiming for himself the proud distinction of being the bastard son of titled parents, Savage made it a point of his attack that most of the people whom he vilified were " of a very low parentage." Of this pamphlet but one passage concerning Mrs. Haywood must suffice, for she came in for more than her share of vituperation at the hands of one who had been her friend and admirer:

" When Mrs. Haywood ceased to be a strolling actress, why might not the lady (though once a theatrical Queen) have subsisted by turning washerwoman? Has not the fall of greatness been a frequent distress in all ages? She might have caught a beautiful bubble as it arose from the suds of her tub, blown it in air, seen it glitter, and then break! Even in this low condition, she had played with a bubble, and what more is the vanity of human greatness? She might have also considered the sullied linen growing white in her pretty red hands, as an emblem of her soul, were it well scoured by repentance for the sins of her youth: but she rather chooses starving by writing novels of intrigue, to teach young heiresses the art of running away with fortune hunters, and scandalizing persons of the highest worth and distinction."

So far as we have ascertained this was the last of Richard Savage's attacks on his whilom friend. He lived on until 1743, becoming a friend of Samuel Johnson's in the interval, and passing through recurrent periods of miserable penury before the end. Of his connection with the story of Eliza Haywood we shall have something more to say in considering his position as Pope's jackal, as Dr. Whicher dubs him, in connection with the *Dunciad.*

x

The fierceness of Eliza Haywood's attack on the lady whom she discredits with having biassed Savage against her is such that it may be interesting to devote some little attention to her. Martha Fowke, who was born in 1690, seems to have developed a passion, beyond the limits of any ordinary sanity, for the minor poet Aaron Hill, and judging by the tenor of her *History* refused all opportunities of marriage until after he was married in 1710 shortly after which she married a Mr. Sansom and went to live in the Temple. In 1719 she published *The Amours of Clio and Strephon,* and became known by the name of Clio to her many literary friends. Her name appears between those of Mrs. Centlivre and Mrs. Haywood among the celebrated wits who gathered round the punch bowl of Duncan Campbell, and it was probably there or through the friendly offices of Aaron Hill that Clio and Eliza met before they were at " war."

How and why the trouble between the two arose we cannot say, though from Eliza's diatribes already quoted it may be surmised that it originated in rivalry for the inconstant affections of Richard Savage. Those diatribes as we have shown appeared in the *Utopia* volume published in 1725, yet Clio's side of the slanging-match appears in a document dated 1723, though not published until 1752, sixteen years after Clio's death and two after the death of Aaron Hill to whom it was addressed. Presumably the " letter " (which runs to 163 printed pages) was found among Hill's papers and so reached the printers. It is entitled *" Clio: or, a Secret History of the Life and Amours of the late celebrated Mrs. S—n—m.* Written by Herself in a Letter to Hillarius." " Hillarius " it may be said is the pet-name for Aaron Hill which Eliza Haywood had devised, a fact her rival must have overlooked or forgotten in so freely adopting it. The following is the passage in

which that rival deals with the scorpion-fiend-devil-tigress, after chronicling the death of her own father:

"My loss was inexpressible, and I find it more every day, and this instant more than ever; when the ashes of the dead are wounded by the malice of the living. My griefs bleed anew, to find the grave is not a retreat from envy, there I hoped to rest with my poor father; but the scorpion Haywood will bear her sting even thither.

"I hear she even violates the dead, who never had the misfortune to see her, and has committed no crime against her but in giving me life; she taxes him with follies he never heard of, my soul knows him innocent of every charge.

"Sure this wretched creature's mind is as harsh and unlucky as her features, that neither death nor innocence can intreat her; how much worse is this female fiend than the villain that stabbed my father's bosom, who darts the poison of her pen in his very dust; may it perish there, nor rise again to hurt the world!

"Pardon me, my angel, while I am speaking of this devil; till now she had not the power to afflict me. Oh, take me to your heavenly protection, and defend me from this tigress, who delights in my misfortunes, and pursues me in all that is dear and sacred to me, my friends, my reputation, my parents, and even my adored Hillarius, who is dearer to me than all these, or life itself; there she would strike me; but I trust in Heaven, and your divine sweetness, you will preserve me from her; what can I expect, oh my adorable, from the tongue that will not spare even you, the sweetest and most lovely of all mankind."

The curious thing about this "letter" is that it is dated two years before the publication of the volume in which Clio as "Gloatitia" is held up to scorn. Possibly it was that Clio purposely broke off her story before her association with Richard Savage began, and back-dated it without realising the discrepancy, or it may be that 1723 is a misprint for 1733. "Clio" died Feb. 17, 1736 and was buried in St. Martin's Church, Leicester.

XI

It is perhaps not likely that the satires of Alexander Pope are very widely read to-day, except by literary students; and *The Dunciad* is probably far more familiar by title than content. Yet for many students of literature—more especially for those who keep to the broad highway on which the didactic poet occupies a prominent position as we follow it through the first half of the 18th century—it is likely that the name of Eliza Haywood is known merely as that of a " heroine " of *The Dunciad,* for there in most unpleasant fashion she is pilloried for all time, as it may be thought most unworthily.

Pope's wonderful satire was first published in May, 1728, surreptitiously, as it were, and anonymously. Though he professedly set out to expose dulness as exemplified in the writings of those whom he denominated dunces, he was really setting out to run amuck among those who had, or those whom he thought had, dared to criticise him. Here, however, we are not concerned with *The Dunciad* as a whole but with that portion of it in which Eliza Haywood is exhibited to scorn and contumely, and never surely was an immortality of shame more wantonly awarded. Forgetting that they who excuse themselves accuse themselves, Pope chose to publish with an early issue of his satire a list of the publications in which he had been " abused " before he published his famous satire by way of retaliation; his doing so was rather an emphasising of the vindictiveness with which he was inspired than its justification. Among those publications was included *Memoirs of Lilliput,* a pseudonymous work which Pope chose to attribute to Mrs. Haywood, without so far as can be ascertained, any evidence whatever other than surmise. In that work, which is quite unlike those books known to be hers, the author describing his association with one of the Lilliput Court Ladies thus expresses the view that such association should not reflect on the lady's reputation:

"The inequality of our stature rightly considered ought to be for us as full a security from slander as that between Mr. Pope and those *great* ladies who do nothing without him; admit him to their closets, their bed-sides, consult him in the choice of their servants, their garments, and make no scruple of putting them on or off before him. Everybody knows they are women of strict virtue, and he a harmless creature, who has neither the will, nor power of doing any further mischief than with his pen, and that he seldom draws but in defence of their beauty; or to second their revenge against some presuming prude, who boasts a superiority of charms; or in privately transcribing and passing for his own the elaborate studies of some more learned genius."

That a real or pretended "Lucas Bennet" should have published such an account of the physical nonentity of Alexander Pope was perhaps a matter of bad taste even in those days, but that the mortified poet should either take some gossipers' word for it, or assume for himself, that a certain woman was masked behind that name and should thereon proceed to libel her with sheer malignancy is indefensible. It was necessary to his purpose that Pope should be able to show that the victims of his satire had attacked him first, and he had for that purpose to attach Eliza Haywood's name to something that she had not written! The work which she had written and which had apparently moved him to make the author one of the most unpleasantly prominent persons of his poem could not be specified—because it had no abuse of Pope in its pages.

This was the *Secret History of the Court of Caramania* one of the chief heroines of which a certain Ismonda was, as has already been said, very plainly Henrietta Howard, mistress of George, Prince of Wales, who became King George the Second a few months after *Caramania* was published. That Mrs. Howard, nominally in attendance on the Queen, was the King's mistress was common knowledge, but her particular friends Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and

ELIZA HAYWOOD

Frontispiece to "The Female Spectator"

Facing page 246

Arbuthnot affected to believe that the relations between the Royal lover and the "Maid of Honour" were purely platonic, and resented Mrs. Haywood's revelations.

Dr. Whicher thinks that it was this scandal about Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, which led to Eliza Haywood being "damned to everlasting celebrity in *The Dunciad*," and if that be so it is a curious fate to have waited on the publication of a scandal which was at least an open secret of the time—Pope and his friends choosing to shut their eyes to facts. It seems to us more likely that Pope may have been told by one or other of those purveyors of gossip on whom he depended for his "facts" that Mrs. Haywood was the actual author of the *Memoirs of Lilliput,* and believing that, was so hurt by the references to his physical insignificance that he gave full play to that cruelty which is not infrequently an accompaniment of crippling physical disabilities. As Dr. Whicher puts it "Mr. Pope's reasons, real and professed, for giving Mrs. Haywood a particularly obnoxious place in his epic of dulness afford a curious illustration of his unmatched capacity ostensibly to chastise the vices of the age, while in fact hitting an opponent below the belt."

The obnoxious passage in *The Dunciad* (Bk. ii, lines 157, etc.) in which the satirist easily "went one worse" than any of the writers he satirised, runs as follows:

> "See in the circle next, Eliza placed;
> Two babes of love close clinging to her waist;
> Fair as before her 'Works' she stands confessed
> In flowered brocade by bounteous Kirkall dressed,*
> Pearls on her neck, and roses in her hair,
> And her fore-buttocks to the navel bare."

The Goddess of Dulness offers this

> "Juno of majestic size
> With cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes"

* Kirkall was the engraver of the portrait of Eliza Haywood which was included in the 1725 edition of her *Works,* in 4 vols.

as prize in a competition of indecency between two of the booksellers, William Chetwood and Edmund Curll, the latter proving successful, for

> "Still happy impudence obtains the prize,
> Thou triumph'st Victor, of the high-wrought day,
> And the pleased dame, soft smiling lead'st away."

Annotation was later employed to emphasise this expression of the poet's malignity. In 1729 a revised version of the satire was published with full notes in which the following amplification is given to the first four of the lines just quoted. First comes an attempted justification:

"In this game is exposed, in the most contemptuous manner, the profligate licentiousness of those shameless scribblers (for the most part of that sex, which ought least to be capable of such malice or impudence) who in libellous Memoirs and Novels, reveal the faults or misfortunes of both sexes, to the ruin of public fame, or disturbance of private happiness. Our good poet (by the whole cast of his work being obliged not to take off the irony) where he could not show his indignation, hath shown his contempt, as much as possible; having here drawn as vile a picture as could be represented in the colours of epic poetry."

The smug implication of that is of course that the publishing particulars of social misdemeanours was a crime, while the misdemeanours themselves mattered not a whit —as long as they might be comfortably ignored. It was nice to have a friend at Court in the person of Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, but it was most unpleasant to have the world told that one's noble friend was the kept mistress of the King. It is to be feared that Alexander Pope did not realise with all his wit and acumen that he was himself a bit of a snob.

The general note concerning the women who wrote novels and memoirs is followed by a particular one on Eliza Haywood herself:

" This woman was authoress of those most scandalous books called the Court of Carimania and the New Utopia. For the *two babes of love,* see Curll, *Key* p. 22. But whatever reflection he is pleased to throw upon this lady, surely it was what from him she little deserved, who had celebrated Curll's undertakings for *reformation of manners,* and declared herself ' to be so perfectly acquainted with the *sweetness of his disposition,* and that *tenderness with which he considered the errors of his fellow creatures;* that, though she should find the *little inadvertencies* of her *own life* recorded in his papers, she was certain it would be done in such a manner as she could not but approve.' Mrs. Haywood, *Hist. of Clar.* printed in *The Female Dunciad* p. 18."

It is strange that Pope should have associated Eliza Haywood with Edmund Curll, for many as were the booksellers through whom her writings had been published Curll was not one of them, so that the letter summarised in the preceding note may be referred to more fully. It was addressed to Curll when he was contemplating a periodical publication to be entitled *The Rover* and along with it Mrs. Haywood sent her story of *Irish Artifice or the History of Clarina.* In the pamphlet war which attended on the publication of *The Dunciad* Curll published not only a *Key* to the satire but also a hastily compiled catchpenny publication, *The Female Dunciad,* in which, without any pertinence he included Mrs. Haywood's letter to himself. That letter has some conventionally fulsome flattery of the man with whom the writer was evidently hoping to establish business relations. In welcoming the projected *Rover* Mrs. Haywood says: " An endeavour for a reformation of manners (in an age where folly is so much the fashion, that to have run through all the courses of debauchery, seem requisite to complete the fine gentleman) is an attempt as *daring* as it is *noble*; and while it engages the admiration and applause of the worthy and judicious

few, will certainly draw on you the ridicule and hatred of that *unnumbered crowd,* who justly dread the lash of a satire, which their own dissolute behaviour has given sting to. But I, who am perfectly acquainted with the sweetness of your disposition, and that tenderness with which you consider the errors of your fellow creatures, need not be informed that while you expose the foulness of those facts, which renders them deservedly objects of reproach, you will [not] forget to pity the weakness of humanity and lethargy of reason, which at some unguarded hours, steals on the souls of even the wisest men; and though I should find, in the course of your papers, all the little inadvertencies of my own life recorded, I am sensible it will be done in such a manner as I cannot but approve."

It was inevitable that Pope should fasten upon this and that he should interpret those "little inadvertencies" as something like a confession as to those "two babes of love" to which he had referred. We have no real evidence of any amours in which Eliza Haywood had been engaged after leaving her husband. She had, assuming that Dr. Whicher's theory be correct, and that she was the wife of the Rev. Valentine Haywood, borne a son in 1711 but this son would have been a youth of seventeen when *The Dunciad* was published. It is of course possible that when eloping from her husband in 1721 she had gone off with a lover and that the "two babes of love" were subsequent to that elopement; they are said to have been fathered respectively by a peer (or poet) and a bookseller but we have nothing but the embittered *Dunciad* literature to go upon in the matter, and it is also possible that the two children she had were both born during the years of her married life. Her own confession as to "little inadvertencies"—a euphemism which is characteristic—has led to the other belief.

We know that, after being her friend and lauder, Richard Savage turned bitterly against Eliza Haywood, and we know also that he, a haunter of the purlieus of Grub

Street, was one of those who supplied the satirist with particular details with which to point his satire; facts for embroidering or rumours for repetition. It is hinted that Savage himself was father of one of the "two babes of love" with which Eliza was discredited, the bookseller-father of the other is not hinted at. Though the "babes" may be nothing more than the invention of malicious scandal, Mrs. Haywood's vague reference to her own little inadvertencies coupled with her reluctance to having the true story of her life known gives colour to there being some grounds for the scandal. There would appear to have been no general denial of the statements in which Pope based his despicable attack on her, and that has of course conveyed the impression that the statements were true. It may be that Mrs. Haywood had so exploited scandals for her own purpose that she felt it would be idle to protest when she became a victim.

Though Pope in successive editions of *The Dunciad* substituted one victim for another as his pique or temper dictated, and so may be thought to have emphasised the personal nature of the whole and lessened its force as true and general satire, he consistently maintained his antipathy to Eliza Haywood and left her in her inglorious prominence, presented in a scene of such coarseness that it is a kind of general hypocrisy which seems to agree in denouncing the plays and scandal-memoirs of our early women writers, and palliates Pope's nastiness by saying that he "tosses about his dung with an air of majesty."* The latest editors of Pope, by the way, in saying that, were but borrowing an illustration from Richard Savage who had sought to excuse Pope's "indelicacies" by saying: "It is true, that he has used dung; but he disposes that dung in such a manner, that it becomes rich manure, from which he raises a variety of fine flowers. He deals in rags;† but deals with them like an artist, who commits

* Elwin and Courthope's *Pope*, iv. 135.
† Savage spoke with authority, as one of his rag-pickers.

them to a paper mill, and brings them out useful sheets. The chymist extracts a fine cordial from the most nauseous of all dung, and Mr. Pope has drawn a sweet poetical spirit from the most offensive and unpoetical objects of the creation—unpoetical, though eternal writers of poetry."

Some three years after the publication of *The Dunciad* there is a curious reference to Mrs. Haywood in the correspondence of Jonathan Swift. It is known that Swift was closely associated with Pope in the production of *The Dunciad* (1728) yet in 1731 he wrote as though the woman so prominently pilloried there was but barely known to him by reputation. He can scarcely be acquitted of the *suggestio falsi*. One of the only reasons discoverable for making Eliza the "heroine" of the *Dunciad* was her daring to publish the fact that Henrietta Howard was the slighted mistress of George II and it was curiously enough a letter from Mrs. Howard, become Countess of Suffolk, that led to Swift's disingenuous statement. Rallying the Dean, the Countess wrote (Sept. 25, 1731) "I should not have despaired, that this monitor of Princes, this Irish patriot, this excellent man at speech and pen, should have closed the scene under suspicions of having a violent passion for Mrs. Barber, and Lady M—— or Mrs. Haywood have writ the progress of it."

In replying to this Swift, with a mendacity he can scarcely have expected his correspondent to believe, said "By Lady M—— I cannot guess whom you mean. Mrs. Haywood I have heard of as a stupid, infamous, scribbling woman, but have not seen any of her productions." That Lady M—— was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Dean Swift must have been well aware, and his reference to Eliza Haywood makes us wonder whether Pope could have claimed any fuller personal knowledge of her productions, beyond the fact of her advertising the Royal amours and being, probably inaccurately, said to have written the *Memoirs of Lilliput* with that description of himself which we are inclined to think had far more to

do with moving his spleen than had the revelations about the part played in "Caramania" by his Countess friend. As he himself confessed "Touch me, and no minister so sore." A few years later in the *Imitations of Horace* he again attacked a woman writer, or women writers as "Sappho," with three separate references, at some of which his whilom friend Lady Mary Wortley Montagu took umbrage and complained to Lord Peterborough who after speaking to Pope on the subject wrote to Lady Mary: "He said to me what I had taken the liberty to say to you, that he wondered how the town would apply these lines to any but some noted common woman; that he would yet be more surprised if you should take them to yourself, he named to me four remarkable poetesses and scribblers, Mrs. Centlivre, Mrs. Haywood, Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Ben (*sic*) assuring me that such only were the objects of his satire." In this Pope was assuredly exemplifying the truth of his statement

> "I, who so oft renounce the Muses, lie,
> Not —'s self e'er tells more fibs than I."

The three references to Sappho in the *Imitations* are all to the living, and Mrs. Behn, Mrs. Centlivre and Mrs. Manley had all been dead for some years, and while one couplet may have been aimed at Eliza Haywood:

> "From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
> P—— by her love, or libelled by her hate;"

Another passage obviously referred to Lady Mary

> "Once, and but once, his heedless youth was bit,
> And liked that dang'rous thing a female wit:
> Safe as he thought, though all the prudent chid;
> He writ no libels, but my Lady did:
> Great odds in am'rous or poetic game,
> Where woman's is the sin, and man's the shame."

That these lines were omitted when the poet published his revised version appears to prove the mendacity of his disclaimer.

XII

It is matter of disagreement among writers as to whether the unpleasant publicity afforded by inclusion in the *Dunciad* affected Eliza Haywood's position as an author in the years that followed. Those who have touched upon the subject incidentally have suggested that Pope's satire was no more effective than seemed the Cardinal's curse in the Jackdaw of Rheims, and that she might have been said to be "not one penny the worse." Dr. Whicher, the only investigator who has gone closely into the matter thinks that she did suffer considerably, and only gradually won back some measure of her earlier popularity. He points out that her name appeared less prominently on the title pages of her writings. Yet if we take nine of those writings published in the dozen years that followed on the original issue of the *Dunciad* we find that only three of them were issued anonymously, three bore her name on the title and three had her signature appended to the dedications: which does not on the face of it suggest that she suffered as much in reputation from the malice of the satirist as might have been anticipated.

What is noticeable, however, is that shortly after the publication of *The Dunciad,* judging by such of her work as has been identified, there was a considerable falling off in her productivity or in the readiness with which the booksellers were prepared to take her wares. In the decade or so from 1730 we find Mrs. Haywood represented by a volume of *Love Letters on all Occasions,* a possible share in the preparing of *The Secret Memoirs of Duncan Campbell,* some songs in *The Opera of Operas,* a couple of volumes of translations from the French and *The Adven-*

tures of Eovaai; she must have had a hard struggle, if wholly dependent on her pen, if that was all her work for ten years.

The *Love Letters* were described on the title page as having " lately passed between persons of distinction," this however was but a catchpenny description, designed to delude the reader into thinking it a collection of contemporary epistolary scandals, for the " persons " were the customary Theandos and Elismondas, Amandas and Lotharios of unreal romance, writing of passion passionately, developing no story and revealing no character.

With *Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo,* Eliza Haywood may be said to have broken new ground, for though the story is taken to have included a bitter attack on Sir Robert Walpole in the character of the villain of the piece, Ochihatou (?Oh-I-hate-you), it sets forth a tale of fantastic romantic happenings in an unknown land that might well have been suggested by the travels of Captain Lemuel Gulliver. The full title-page amplification runs " A Pre-Adamitical History. Interspersed with a great number of remarkable occurrences, which happened, and may happen again to several Empires, Kingdoms, Republics and particular great men. With some account of the religion, laws, customs and policies of those times. Written originally in the language of Nature (of late years but little understood). First translated into the Chinese, at the command of the Emperor, by a cabal of seventy philosophers; and now re-translated into English, by the son of a mandarin, residing in London."

The grasping, ambitious, lustful Ochihatou pursues the poor Princess Eovaai with his unwelcome attentions and strong magic that must have taken him well away from the political original whom the author had imperfectly in mind. There is a frequent use of coined words supposed to be the language of the strange lands in which the action takes place, the idea borrowed from Swift, and there are extraordinary doings described, and vague wild scenes sug-

gestive of some of the imaginings of the William Beckford of a later period.

The way in which Ochihatou was meant to satirise Walpole was pointed in a footnote to a passage describing his seizing of public treasure and converting it to his own use. This footnote ran: "Our author might have saved himself the trouble of particularising in what manner Ochihatou applied the nation's money: since he had said enough, in saying he was a Prime Minister, to make the reader acquainted with his conduct on that point."

Commenting on this passage, the usually careful Dr. Whicher says "That Walpole not only perceived, but actively resented the affront, we may infer, though evidence is lacking, from the six years of silence that followed the publication of the satire. Perhaps the government saw fit to buy off the troublesome author by a small appointment, but such indulgent measures were not usually applied to similar cases. More probably Eliza found it wise to seek in France or some neighbouring country the safety from the malignant power of the Prime Minister that her heroine sought in the Kingdom of Oozoff."

It must, however, be pointed out that the "silence" was one of four years not six—and that Eliza Haywood's next publication was a reprint of the same story with the new and more pointed title of *The Unfortunate Princess; or the Ambitious Statesman* and with her name on the title-page where the earlier issue had been anonymous. It is true that of the conditions of Eliza Haywood's life we know nothing. There is no evidence of any official notice being taken of her satire, and at such a time a period in prison might have been as likely a consequence as any "small appointment." The next *new* publication of hers would fill out the gap of six years for this was a translation from the French of *The Virtuous Villager* which was published in 1742.

XIII

At the end of the first volume of *The Virtuous Villager* there is a curiosity-provoking announcement which indicates that for a time—presumably but a brief one—Eliza Haywood set up as a publisher. The announcement runs thus:

"New Books, sold by Eliza Haywood, Publisher, at the Sign of Fame in Covent Garden.

"I. The Busy-Body; or Successful Spy; being the entertaining History of Mons. Bigand. . . . The whole containing great variety of adventures, equally instructive and diverting.

II. Anti-Pamela, or Feign'd Innocence detected, in a series of Syrena's Adventures: a Narrative which has really its Foundation in Truth and Nature. . . . Publish'd as a necessary Caution to all Young Gentlemen. Second Edition." With the addition of the following sufficiently suggestive descriptive motto from Nicholas Rowe's *Fair Penitent:*

"Fatally fair they are and in their smiles
The Graces, little Loves, and young Desires inhabit;
But all that gaze upon them are undone;
For they are false, luxurious in their appetites,
And all the Heaven they hope for is variety.
One lover to another still succeeds;
Another, and another after that,
And the last fool is welcome as the former;
Till having loved his hour out, he gives his place,
And commingles with the herd that went before him."

This advertisement is so explicit that Dr. Whicher accepts it as evidence that in the bookselling business the novelist had "a second string to her bow." We have

however failed to find any volume bearing her imprint. Neither of the two works named does, *The Busy-Body* (1742) was "printed for F. Cogan at the Middle Temple Gate;" and the *Anti-Pamela* (1741) "printed for J. Huggonson in Sword and Buckler Court, over against the Crown Tavern on Ludgate Hill." It is possible that Mrs. Haywood was living in Covent Garden, and that she acted as agent for the sale of her own books, for it is probable that for both of the works in question she was herself responsible. The first of them, as a mere translation, need not detain us but the *Anti-Pamela* is of real interest. Richardson's *Pamela* had been published in November, 1740, and early in the following year everybody was talking of it, and soon various catchpenny publications using the name and fame of Richardson's knowing young heroine were being hurriedly produced, and among the number in June, 1741, came *Anti-Pamela* which assuredly deserves a high place though it is not so much as mentioned in either Austin Dobson's or Clara L. Thomson's biography of the printer-novelist.

This work, which may be unhesitatingly ascribed to the pen of Eliza Haywood, forms a volume of 281 pages, and is described on the title page as *Anti-Pamela or Feigned Innocence Detected,* and on the opening page as *Anti-Pamela, or Mock-Modesty Displayed and Punished.* It is a highly improper story of the goings on of Syrena, who may be regarded as a predestined prostitute, one who from her teens carried on with more than one "lover" at a time in the most flagrant fashion, in accordance with her own instinct and under the instigation and advice of her horrible mother. It is not possible to do more than indicate one of the stages of her career when, while the mistress of an infatuated "Mr. D——" she went off during his (supposed) absence to visit another "lover." Mr. D—— comes to their lodgings and finds Syrena out, but seeing that a letter is there for her from her mother opens it—and finds how it is that he is being duped!

" No man that has not loved, entrusted, and been jilted and betrayed, like Mr. D——, can have a true notion of what he felt at this scene of villainy, so wonderfully laid open to him—he shuddered to think there could be so much wickedness in the world; but when he reflected that it had been practised on himself, by a person he had so much confided in, he was all rage and madness. Had he followed the first dictates of his fury he would have staid till the false Syrena had come home, and torn out her beguiling eyes, and soft dissembling tongue; but reason afterward remonstrating, that all he could do, would be but a demeaning of himself, and fall short of what her hypocrisy merited at his hands, he took pen and paper, and wrote to her in these terms:

" *Base Monster.* A letter from your vile mother and accomplice of your crimes, has fallen into my hands; I need say no more to let you know, I am no longer a stranger to your treachery to me, and the injured Maria. —Tremble then, cursed deceiver! thou abandoned profligate! thou hoard of complicated crimes, at my just resentment, and fly for ever from my sight, lest I stamp deformity on every limb, and make thy body hideous as thy soul.—'Tis highly probable I am not the first, but am resolved to be the last on whom your detestable artifices shall take effect—Captain H——s shall be immediately informed what a viper he cherishes; and after, your character shall be made public, to warn all mankind from falling into those snares, so fatal to the reputation and peace of mind of D——.

" This letter he left for her on the table, and put that from her mother into his pocket as an evidence of their confederated baseness."

This proves but a mere check in the career of the " hoard of complicated crimes," and there are many other episodes before Syrena is carried off for punishment as a common prostitute—and the author has provided a goodly succession of " amorous intrigues " before reaching the end

which may be said to have the "moral" of the final failure of vice.

Though *Anti-Pamela* is ignored by writers on Richardson, it is probably the best of the sixteen "Remarks, Imitations, Retailings of the Story, Piracies, etc." by which certain writers sought to exploit to their own profit the popularity of *Pamela*. It was objected against Richardson's story that some of the scenes erred on the side of warmth; from *Pamela* to *Anti-Pamela* we may be said to pass from the (comparatively) temperate to the tropical zone of the world of fiction. We say comparatively, recalling that Austin Dobson said of Richardson that "abnormally interested in certain forms of wrong-doing, he has in his descriptions, sometimes exhibited a more prurient pre-occupation with undesirable details than is generally exhibited by a moralist."

The next work of Eliza Haywood's that calls for mention may be looked upon as being also something of a by-product of the fame of *Pamela*. This was *A Present for a Servant Maid, or a Sure Way of gaining Love and Esteem*. This book was first attributed to Mrs. Haywood some years after her death, and if not wholly her work is probably so in large part. It was issued by the bookseller, T. Gardner, who published all the books known definitely to be hers from 1744 until her death, and may well have been the first of her books that he issued. It had much more or less simple advice to servant girls on their work and behaviour, and (quite in Eliza Haywood's manner) elaborate particulars as to how they were to demean themselves in preserving their chastity against the diverse attacks of an employer, the son of the house, or a lodger therein. The book also had practical advice as to marketing, cookery, etc., wholly unlike anything known of Eliza's, though she was doubtless equal to such compilation if called upon.

Early in 1744 was published *The Fortunate Foundlings*, which was described as "being the genuine history of

Colonel M——rs and his sister Madame Du P——y, the issue of the Hon. Ch——es M——rs, son of the late Duke of R—l—d." The syncopated family name was of course Manners, and the "history" was supposed to be that of twins derived from the Rutland family who having been "found" in the year 1688, pass through all kinds of adventures on the Continent she in maintaining her honour and self respect and he in winning military fame. In the end they are claimed as true son and daughter of their "finder," whose name Dorilans, links him with the old type of Eliza's romances, but in naming her hero and heroine Horatio and Louisa she marks her advance towards the newer style in fiction. She does so also, as in the *Anti-Pamela,* in giving the story greater unity of design than in the novels of her earlier period.

In connection with this book Dr. Whicher points out what a notable vogue the foundling had in the years immediately following on the establishment in 1741 of Captain Coram's great charity* in Hatton Garden and before its removal to the famous buildings in Guildford Street, lately demolished.

XIV

In the last two decades of her life Eliza Haywood may be said to have established something of a new reputation, despite the fact that her exposure to public contumely in *The Dunciad* was never really lived down. Though it is some of her later works which by the generality of critics are regarded as her best, and though the issue of repeated editions of them indicated that they met with contemporary approval, she was unable to claim recognition for them. None of her books, after the 1740 reprint of *The Unfor-*

* "A pamphlet called *The Political Foundling* was followed by the well-known *Foundling Hospital for Wit and Humour* (1743), by Mrs. Haywood's *Fortunate Foundlings* (1744), by Moore's popular comedy, *The Foundling* (1748), and last and greatest by *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749), not to mention *The Female Foundling* (1750)."

tunate Princess bore her name on the original issue, they were mostly described as " by the author of——" this that or the other preceding popular success. The effect of Pope's malice continued though he was in the grave.

In April, 1744, there was issued the first part of a monthly publication with the title of *The Female Spectator*. Based of course on the *Spectator* of thirty years earlier, the new periodical had one important difference in that it was a monthly and not a daily publication, and another in that Eliza Haywood was not a Joseph Addison. Although her " Female Spectator Club " was described as consisting of herself and three other ladies, it seems fairly conclusive that the pen throughout was that of Eliza alone, and month by month for two years was the project carried on with evident popular success, and as her contemporaries thought with considerable literary success also.

The four volumes of *The Female Spectator* can to-day scarcely claim the attention of readers except as curiosities, the discursive verbosity of the writer made her but a poor continuator to Addison and his colleagues. Though she set out to be the gentle monitress of the generation for whom she was writing and expressed unexceptionable views on many matters concerning taste and manners she could not long resist the temptation to tell at undue length some romantic story more or less pertinent to her immediate theme. At the outset she seemed to recall something of her own work of twenty years earlier, and to seek to emphasise the difference of the Spectator of 1744 from the " secret " historian of the past.

She feels it " highly proper " to acquaint the town in somewhat extravagant language:

" That to secure an eternal fund of intelligence, spies are placed, not only in all the places of resort in and about this great metropolis, but at Bath, Tunbridge, and the Spaw, and means found out to extend my speculations even as far as France, Rome, Germany, and other foreign

parts; so that nothing curious or worthy remark can escape me; and this I look upon to be a more effectual way of penetrating into the mysteries of the alcove, the cabinet, or field, than if I had the power of invisibility, or could, with a wish, transport myself wherever I pleased, since with the aid of those supernatural gifts, I could still be in no more than one place at a time; whereas now, by tumbling over a few papers from my emissaries, I have all the secrets of Europe, at least such of them as are proper for my purpose, laid open at one view.

"I would, by no means, however, have what I say be construed into a design of gratifying a vicious propensity of propagating scandal: whoever sits down to read me with this view, will find themselves mistaken; for though I shall bring real facts on the stage, I shall conceal the actor's names under such as will be conformable with their characters; my intention being only to expose the vice, not the person. Nor shall I confine myself to modern transactions: whenever I find any transaction among the ancients, which may serve to illustrate the topic I shall happen to be upon, I shall make no scruple to insert it. An instance of shining virtue in any age, can never be too often proposed as a pattern, nor the fatality of misconduct too much impressed on the minds of our youth of both sexes; and as the sole aim of the following pages is to reform the faulty, and give an innocent amusement to those who are not so, all possible care will be taken to avoid everything that might serve as food for the venom of malice and ill-nature. Whoever, therefore, shall pretend to fix on any particular person the blame of actions they may happen to find recorded here, or make what they call a key to these lucubrations, must expect to see themselves treated in the next publication with all the severity so unfair a proceeding merits."

It was perhaps characteristic of Eliza Haywood that she started off with a consideration of the tender passion,

in the story of Martesia " by one inadvertent step undone," and other female victims of a system which allowed girls and women too little freedom in Society. Later it may be said something of a like danger is shown in immoderate desire for company. Though the evils of gambling, the value of conversation and other improving topics are considered the author finds her pen run most freely when she can slip into the telling of a tale of some unreal and romantically named people.

Some months after *The Female Spectator* had been started a correspondent wrote complaining that the writer had not carried out her promise of giving all manner of secret histories such as were promised in the preamble; to which the reply was: " to check the enormous growth of luxury, to reform the morals, and improve the manners of an age, by all confessed degenerate and sunk, are the great ends for which these essays were chiefly intended." In the very next number the fair Spectator set forth at length a dialogue between a Hanoverian Lady and an English Lady in which the former attacks the English for their arrogance, their positiveness and their pride, and the other defends them. The dialogue is fairly entertaining, though the protagonists sometimes spoke at considerable length, and though nearly two centuries have passed since it was written it has on some matters a curiously modern note.

Shortly after *The Female Spectator* came to an end, its " authors," otherwise Eliza Haywood, started *The Parrot,* a weekly periodical of discussive gossiping, moralising and mild philosophising upon the manners of the time which need not detain us. A notable feature of the publication was that the weekly essay was followed by a " Compendium " of home and foreign news in the form of a letter to a friend in the country; this was probably the work of " another hand." The experiment did not succeed and *The Parrot* did not last beyond nine numbers.

Some years later Eliza Haywood once more attempted the periodical essay in *The Young Lady,* of which only

three numbers were issued, and copies of these do not appear to have survived so it is not possible to indicate the character of the work.

XV

Among the posthumous publications of Eliza Haywood there appeared in 1788 *The History of Leonora Meadowson,* a two-volume story of which no existing copy is recorded, a matter which we refer to here because in 1745 there was published a novel which might possibly prove to be its original issue. This novel, *Leonora: or, Characters drawn from real life,* which was published by Mrs. Haywood's bookseller, appears to be beyond much doubt that author's work; the following sentence has familiar parallels in her acknowledged writings: "If to convey delight with instruction is, or ought to be, the grand aim of all who write; 'tis hoped the author of the following sheets has not entirely deviated from so excellent a rule."

Our author's progress from highfalutin and loosely constructed romance towards the novel in which a unified story is presented was newly exemplified in *Life's Progress through the Passions: or the Adventures of Natura,* though her story would have gained had she further broken with her own tradition and given her hero a name as simple as that of Tom Jones. Her expressed object was to show in "what manner the passions operate in every stage of life, and how far the constitution of the outward frame is concerned in the emotions of the internal faculties." Natura, as his affected name may be taken to imply, is intended to be as representative a person as Everyman, and his life story is told episodically; among the passions by which he is moved that of love taking the most prominent part. He is concerned in various amorous intrigues, quite in the vein of the old romances, before he returns to England and "settles down," with three successive wives, and dies at the age of sixty-three. As though by way of apology for some of the earlier, warmer, episodes, Eliza Haywood in her

new-found dignity as a moralist and a novelist-with-a-purpose, still finds it difficult to avoid hinting that her story is a "secret history":

"Thus I have attempted to trace nature in all her mazy windings, to show life's progress through the passions from the cradle to the grave. The various adventures which happened to Natura, I thought, afforded a more ample field than those of any one man I ever heard of, or read of; and flatter myself, that the reader will find many instances, that may contribute to rectify his own conduct, by pointing out those things which ought to be avoided, or at least most carefully guarded against, and those which are worthy to be improved and imitated."

Despite the way in which the author handicapped her hero with a generalised name, instead of humanising him with the individuality of a Christian name and patronymic, the story of Natura is of interest not only in Eliza Haywood's continuing development (she was probably nearly sixty when it was published), it is of interest in the development of the novel generally, an attempt to delineate ordinary life. Furthermore, as Dr. Whicher has pointed out, it entitles the author to be looked upon as something of a pioneer in what might be regarded as an unexpected way. It is generally said that William Gilpin, who wrote on the theme in the closing decade of the 18th century, was the "inventor" of the modern appreciation of scenery, and taught people that mountains were not "horrid," but here is Eliza Haywood writing in 1748:

"Whether you climb the craggy mountains or traverse the flowery vale; whether thick woods set limits to the sight, or the wide common yields unbounded prospect; whether the ocean rolls in solemn state before you, or gentle streams run purling by your side, nature in all her different shapes delights. . . . The stupendous mountains of the Alps, after the plains and soft embowered recesses of Avignon, gave perhaps a no less grateful sensation to the mind of Natura."

A year after that story Eliza returned to a form in which she evidently fancied herself, that of letter-writing, and produced two volumes of *Epistles for the Ladies*. They might also have been described as from and mostly to the ladies, the names of whom are once more those of the romance period, Euselia, Berinthia, Aminta. Though labelled epistles, they might almost as well be termed essays, including as they do musings, philosophisings on all manner of subjects from the love of lovers to the fear of death, on town and country, on reading, music and so forth, with but few lapsings into the passionate note of the *Love Letters* of nearly twenty years earlier.

XVI

With *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* we come to Eliza Haywood's most notable work in fiction, a story in four "dumpy duodecimos" that while following the fortunes of its heroine, is concerned with actual life, and possible people, though the author, as exemplified in the name of her heroine, clung to the old comedy method of indicating character by nomenclature—Mr. Trueworth, Sir Ralph Trusty, Miss Forward, Mr. Staple, Mr. Gaylord are some of the labels attached to the people who figure in the story. Despite the touch of artificiality thus imparted to it, *Betsy Thoughtless* is that one of Eliza Haywood's novels that best stands the test of to-day's reading. Betsy is a vivacious heedless young person who is led into many embarrassing situations through her disregard for the conventions. After a number of escapades, and the alienation of her true lover, she marries a most unsatisfactory Mr. Manden, whose demand for unthinking obedience to his dictates leads to her abandoning him, in which we may have another harking-back of the author to the cause of the failure of her own marriage. Betsy's husband dies and Mr. Trueworth's wife is conveniently considerate in the same way, and so the happy ending is brought about by a time-honoured con-

vention;* and "thus were the virtues of our heroine (those follies that had defaced them being fully corrected) at length rewarded with a happiness, retarded only till she had rendered herself wholly worthy of receiving it."

Among the very few and slight allusions to persons or places of the period, in a story dealing with contemporary life, there is a strange outburst against Henry Fielding:

"There were no plays, no operas, no masquerades, no balls, no public shows, except at the Little Theatre in the Hay Market, then known by the name of F——g's scandal shop, because he frequently exhibited there certain drolls, or, more properly, invectives against the ministry; in doing which it appears extremely probable that he had two views; the one to get money, which he very much wanted, from such as delighted in low humour, and could not distinguish true satire from scurrility; and the other, in the hope of having some post given him by those he had abused, in order to silence his dramatic talent. But it is not my business to point either the merit of that gentleman's performances, or the motives he had for writing them, as the town is perfectly acquainted both with his abilities and success, and has since seen him, with astonishment, wriggle himself into favour, by pretending to cajole, those he had not the power to intimidate."†

It would seem that there must have been some provocation for this attack, though it has not been discovered. Possibly there had been trouble over the, probably unauthorised, conversion of Fielding's *Tom Thumb* into the *Opera of Operas* in which Eliza had taken part twenty years earlier. The attack, too, was particularly ungracious,

* Writing to Samuel Richardson, in February, 1752, Mrs. Donnellan said "who the author of *Betsy Thoughtless* is I don't know, but his poetic justice I think very bad: he kills a good woman to make way for one of the worst, in my opinion, I ever read of."

† The reference to Fielding's "invectives against the ministry" places the date as 1736-7. It is interesting to note, by the way, that it was to those dramatic satires of Henry Fielding's that the Act of Parliament making a license from the Lord Chamberlain necessary for all dramatic performances owed its existence.

seeing that Mrs. Haywood had evidently borrowed from Fielding's humorous chapter-headings to *Tom Jones* her own scheme of chapter headings for *Betsy Thoughtless,* a couple of examples of which run: "Chapter v. *contains nothing very extraordinary, yet such things as are highly proper to be known.* Chapter xix. *will make the reader little wiser.*"

There is indeed unusual humour in many of the chapter headings of *Betsy Thoughtless,* and there can be little doubt that the adaptable Mrs. Haywood had learned the trick from the latest work of the author she derided. An interesting suggestion has been put forward that Fanny Burney founded her *Evelina* on Eliza Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless,* owing to certain parallels between the two stories, but such parallels appear to be the result of coincidence rather than any direct association,* and need not detain us here.

The next novel, *The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy,* was less successful than its immediate predecessor, in that it was necessarily more discursive, following the sentimental adventures of a young couple who had been affianced by their parents as children. Both are left orphans, and on venturing into the social world of London see so many instances of unhappy marriage that they defer their union—to give their creator the opportunity of placing them in a succession of trying situations. The story, less realistic than *Betsy Thoughtless* and more bombasted out with letters and digressions, has, partly perhaps from its alliterative title, occasionally been referred to as typical of the "emotional inane," whether it, more pleasingly, was responsible for the nickname of Goldsmith's "Jessamy Bride" we have been unable to determine. In it the author continued her borrowing of Fielding's method of chapter headings, and sometimes at a length beyond that of her model.

* The parallels are elaborated in Dunlop's *History of Prose Fiction,* 1888.

XVII

Eliza Haywood was already over fifty when Richardson and Fielding in their diverse ways so strongly marked a stage in the development of English fiction; with Fielding more especially it may be said that the novel became modernised, and though the woman writer was conscious of the change and made a brave attempt to move with the times, she rarely broke away for long from her old methods. In what was to be the last long book she completed the return to those older methods was to be more particularly marked. This book seems to have been suggested by her own words in *The Female Spectator,* already quoted, in which she referred to such supernatural gifts as the power of invisibility. The new book, over the pen-name of "Exploralibus," was *The Invisible Spy,* in the four volumes of which we have short stories, and a great variety of things concerning a great number of miscellaneous people. Thanks to the gift from a dying curio-monger, the narrator acquired a belt conferring invisibility and—imaginative adumbration of the gramophone or dictaphone! —"the wonderful tablet which, in whatever place it is spread open, receives the impression of every word that is spoken in as distinct a matter as if engraved." And that impression can only be expunged by the breath of a virgin who has never "even thought of the difference of sexes"—which it may be said necessitates the bringing up of a female child from infancy, and keeping her as it were in captivity, —till the sight of the portrait of a young man destroys her power of expunging!

With her belt and wonderful tablet the author has the opportunity of revealing much concerning the intimate lives of many people, and especially those matters concerning the affections which still occupied a large share of her attention. On one occasion she was able to record a conversation concerning the mysterious disappearance of Elizabeth Canning. Unfortunately, her supernatural aids did

not suffice to throw any new light on the case of that young woman, the mystery of whose reported abduction for a month cannot be said ever to have been solved, even though the principal was by law adjudged guilty of perjury and suffered transportation therefor. The Canning Case is matter of long past history—and subject of a voluminous literature; but quite a modern note seems struck where the "Invisible Spy" says "foolhardy, as I perhaps was looked upon for venturing alone through Hyde Park on account of some ill accidents had lately happened there."

At the close of 1755 or early in 1756 were published two small volumes on *The Wife* and *The Husband* in which was set forth much general advice on matters concerning marital companionship, the former one explaining—a matter on which Mrs. Haywood had had many years experience—"how a woman ought to behave when in a state of separation from her husband." The advice is of course diversified and "illustrated" by all manner of examples, concerning quarrels, jealousies and other matters; while the wife is warned not to take too much notice of her husband's passing gallantries, and the husband not to indulge in too much freedom with his wife's female acquaintances, and to behave in a seemly fashion towards the maidservants of the family. These essays in domestic didacticism are somewhat trite and somewhat dull, but again we find a modern note in the author's protest against the word "obey" in the Marriage Service.

We have before had to lament, from the biographical point of view, how thoroughly Eliza Haywood had covered up her tracks, and she would seem to have slipped out of life in so obscure a fashion that no note of her death is to be found in the ordinary sources of such information. The only record is found in the *Biographia Dramatica* of 1782, where Baker says: "All I have been able to learn is, that her father was in the mercantile way, that she was born at London, and that at the time of her death, which was on the 25th of February, 1756, she was about sixty-

three years of age." If we are right in assuming that she was the Elizabeth Fowler christened in January, 1689-90, then she was just over sixty-six at the date of her death, if that date be accurately given by Baker, for a certain vagueness accompanies us to the end of her story as the year is given in other works as 1758 and 1759.

XVIII

Anything in the nature of a critical estimate of Eliza Haywood's work and consideration of her position in the growth of the novel does not come within the scheme of this volume. Such have been on the whole admirably presented in Dr. Whicher's study of Mrs. Haywood and her romances. A voluminous writer over a period of forty years, she marked in her own works something of the change that was coming over the spirit of our fiction, and as Dr. Whicher puts it "from *Love in Excess* to *Betsy Thoughtless* was a step far more difficult than from the latter novel to *Evelina*." There is, however, one matter on which we may touch by way of conclusion for the light it affords on her elusive personality, for so much has been said, to employ her own phrase, of the lusciousness of her work that she is frequently dismissed from any summary account of our literary history, when she is not wholly ignored, in a line indicating her impropriety, as though that sufficed. Yet she really occupies an important transitional position in the development of the novel. Though much of her writing was that kind which developed, by way of Aphra Behn, from the French romance-writers such as d'Urfé and Mademoiselle Scudéry, she was, in intention if no more, a forerunner of those who sought to make a feigned story the vehicle of moral teaching. On this point she has had inadequate recognition.

Austin Dobson, the most engaging cicerone along the highways and among the byways of our 18th century social life and literature, appears to have paid but scant attention

to Eliza Haywood. Writing* of the publication of *Pamela* (in November, 1740), he says: "Of its own class, nothing had appeared in 1740 save *The Unfortunate Princess* of Mrs. Eliza Haywood." Not only was that book a reprint, with a new title, of one that had been published four years earlier, but it could only possibly be termed of the same class as *Pamela,* in that both were fiction, which is perhaps all that was intended. Later on Dobson says of Richardson's novel "its professed moral purpose—a new thing in a novel—was a further feature in its favour." All that was "new" was that the "purpose" was blazoned on the title page.

Quite early in her career Eliza Haywood had very emphatically "professed moral purpose" in her stories, and even claimed that her impassioned romance was but a means to that end. Thus as early as 1723, in dedicating *Lasselia* to the Earl of Suffolk, she said: "My design in writing this little novel (as well as those I have formerly published) being only to remind the unthinking part of this world how dangerous it is to give way to passion, will, I hope, excuse the too great warmth, which may perhaps appear in some particular pages; for without the *expression* being invigorated in some measure proportionate to the *subject* 'twould be impossible for a reader to be sensible how far it touches him, or how probable it is that he is falling into those inadvertencies which the examples I relate would caution him to avoid.

"I take the liberty of mentioning this to your Lordship, to clear myself of that aspersion which some of my own sex have been unkind enough to throw upon me that 'I seem to endeavour to *divert* more than *improve* the minds of my readers.' Now, as I take it, the aim of every person, who pretends to write (though in the most insignificant and ludicrous way), ought to tend at least to a good *moral* use; I should be sorry to have my intentions judged to be the very reverse of what they are in reality."

* Samuel Richardson, pp. 32-33.

That emphatic protestation of moral aims is interesting as an early appreciation of the tendency of English fiction that was to become very marked nearly a quarter of a century later. Eliza Haywood was, it must be admitted, by no means consistent in her claim, for little more than a month later, in dedicating *The Rash Resolve* to Lady Rumney, she referred to her own novels as "the products of a genius which wanting the improvements of a learned education, pretends no farther merit than an aim to please."

Again, in 1724, in dedicating *The Fatal Surprise* to Sir Richard Steele, Mrs. Haywood wrote: "I no longer can refrain that public acknowledgment which is your due from the whole world, whom your inimitable writings have improved. . . . You, Sir, teach us how to think, as well as act; and by inspiring us with just and noble sentiments render it impossible to behave in a manner contrary to them. The little History I presume to offer, being composed of characters full of honour and generosity, I thought I had a fit opportunity, by presenting it to one who has made it so much his study to infuse those principles, and whose every action is a shining example of them, to express my zeal in declaring myself with all imaginable regard, Sir, your most obliged and most obedient humble servant, Eliza Haywood."

Again in prefacing *The Tea-Table* she disclaims having in view any particular persons or families in the characters presented in the conversations, the design being "only to expose those little foibles which disgrace humanity and render those who are guilty of them incapable of receiving that admiration and respect which their other great qualities and accomplishments would else merit from the world. If I succeed in my aim so far as to influence but one person to correct any of these solecisms in humour, I shall think myself happy; and if I fail, have yet this comfort, that it is less my fault than my misfortune."

And yet again of *The Fruitless Enquiry* (1727) the author

says the sheets "contain the history of some real facts," the "chief design in publishing them being to persuade my sex from seeking happiness the wrong way."

Those passages suffice to show that Eliza Haywood was ahead of Samuel Richardson in "professing a moral purpose" in her fictions, though it was only after Richardson had shown the way that, in some of her later works she was able as it were to trade on the purpose—and so win the commendation of the Clara Reeves of criticism.

CHAPTER V

LETITIA PILKINGTON: SWIFT'S "INSOLENT SLUT"

A malicious wit and her husband—Married rivals—Dutch-Irish origin—A cruel upbringing—Strange wooing and strange wedding—Letitia drops into verse—Introduction to Jonathan Swift—"This poor child married!"—A dinner with the Dean—The game of guest-baiting—Anecdotes of Swift—The Pilkington's Lilliputian Palace—Matthew made chaplain to London's Lord Mayor—Letitia left in Dublin—Pilkington as Swift's catspaw—Letitia follows Matthew—Meets Worsdale the painter—A wife for "the best bidder"—Swift's agents victimised—Return to Dublin—Family jars and a tragedy—Compromising a wife—Curious "indiscretion"—Invaded by watchmen and taken in the fact—Turned out of doors—Half-divorced—Worsdale demands impossibilities—To London as adventuress—Finds a friend in Colley Cibber—Guinea-hunting with a pen—"The most desolate person in the world"—Lies and libels from Dublin—Depths of misery—Lodged in the Marshalsea—Introduction to Samuel Richardson—Pamphlet-seller and letter-writer—News of her son John A night in the Abbey—Again Worsdale's wretched "ghost"—Back to Dublin—Scandal of the "Memoirs."

I

HOW can a reader discriminate, when reading a biography, between fact and fiction, or between actual fact and that which is embroidered by the mind which relates it? As far as Letitia Pilkington is concerned, her main facts are supported by contemporary history, even the character of her husband, which she

gives, gets support from observations by such men as Bolingbroke, Pope and others. But she had a malicious wit and could make a small person look very small. The greater part of what we know of Matthew, her husband, comes to us from Letitia's *Memoirs,* and there is not a writer upon these two people who does not consciously or unconsciously accept her view of him. Matthew stands condemned for all time, even by those who jibe at and condemn Letitia as a light woman and a vain babbler. We wonder whether he deserved all that he got, for he was a man of parts, showing ability from his very start. Yet he was also a man of roving fancy. That he, acting as chaplain to London's Lord Mayor, should have been openly discussed in London for his association with an actress, proved his irresponsibility towards both his office and himself; that he did his best to rid himself of his wife by throwing her into the arms of other men indicates the truth of Bolingbroke's comment, that he wanted morals and even decency.

II

Letitia Van Lewen was a little thing, a creature born for sunshine and happiness, light-hearted yet philosophical when in trouble, quick-witted and clever. Had she married a man of ordinary virtue and stable position, it is probable that no one apart from her immediate friends would have heard of her, except as a verse-maker; for she had what her husband called "an insatiable itch for writing." The tragedy of her life lay in her marriage with a man whose attainments ran with her own in this respect, and in the further fact that she had the greater talent. Matthew desired to be thought a wit, but his wife's tongue was quicker and sharper than his; he wished to set up as a poet and published one little volume, but Letitia could produce better verse than his on any and every occasion; he was patronised by Dean Swift, and then Letitia crept in, under his arm as it were, and became a constant companion to the Dean;

and incidentally made herself famous for posterity by her understanding and written accounts of the great man. Matthew grew to hate her with a jealous hatred, until life together became a torture. There were occasions, if they had been apart for a time, on which he could be pleasant, but the mood soon passed, and he reverted to petty indignities, such as locking the tea-chest, or taking away the key of the garden so that she and the children should enjoy neither.

Our chief source of information about the Pilkingtons is the three-volume *Memoirs of Letitia Pilkington,* and it might be said that they were biassed. It is more than probable that they were. But on the other hand there are allusions in other works, and there is one damning document of Matthew's own, his will, discovered by Mr. F. Elrington Ball, and first published in *Notes and Queries,* that betrays the malignity which lay in his soul towards his wife and children.

It was a dreadful situation and Matthew tried dreadful means of ending it. The end came draggingly, and this little butterfly woman was thrown out upon the world. She did her best for herself, but she was not practical and of course had had no training to fit her for such a fight; as Colley Cibber wrote to her in later years:

"A word in your majesty's ear. Common sense might have prevented many misfortunes as your High and Mightiness has been reduced to run through. 'Tis true you have stood them all with a Catonian constancy; but I fancy you might have passed your life as merrily without them."

Letitia was the daughter of Dr. Van Lewen, the son of a Dutch physician, who practised as man-midwife in Dublin. Her mother was proud of being descended from "an ancient and honourable family," her great-grandfather being the Earl of Killmallock. The descent was upon the female side, and Letitia's grandfather was a Colonel Meade, a name which she claimed for herself in after years.

There is no reason to doubt Letitia's word that she was born in 1712, though some biographers have placed the date as early as 1700, a year which agrees with none of the events of her life. She was a small and weakly child, and her mother had little understanding of the needs of childhood; for every lapse of any sort was met with corporal punishment, "she strictly followed Solomon's advice in never sparing the rod." The child was forbidden to read, because smallpox had left behind a weakness in the eyes, "my mother regarding more the beauty of my face than the improvement of my mind." The restriction however defeated its object; twenty times a day she would put such and such letters together and ask the nearest person what they meant; "my mother used to tell me the word accompanying it with a good box on the ear, which, I suppose, imprinted it on my mind." She declares that once she was told a word she never forgot it. Later in life she could repeat whole poems which she had heard but once, but it may be imagined not always word-perfect. At the age of five she seems to have mastered by her own exertions the art of reading.

One day she got hold of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* and read it aloud to herself. Her father, hearing her voice, softly opened the door, and the poor child, bursting into tears, dropped the book, and began to swear she would never do it again. But he, much more sensible (indulgent, she styles it) than her mother, took her and the book into his study and bade her read on, banishing her tears with kisses and rewarding her pertinacity with a shilling.

From that time she was allowed to read as much as she liked. Also she took to writing verse, and she adds with naïve pride, "the greatest and the wisest men in the kingdom did not disdain to hear the prattle of 'the little muse,' as they called me."

At that date children were precocious in more ways than one, and by the time this infant was thirteen years of age, she had almost as many lovers! and she "might have been

happily disposed of in marriage," but that her mother's capricious temper made her reject every advantageous proposal offered, "and at last condemned me to the arms of one of the greatest villains, with reverence to the priesthood be it spoken, that ever was wrapped up in crepe." Her description of herself at that time is that she was entirely submissive to her parents, unaffectedly innocent, and much more pleased with female friends than with the company of men.

Among the young people who formed her companions appeared a parson, a girl friend's brother's friend. She describes him as having a good face, agreeable accomplishments, a tolerable taste in music, and a poetical turn, all of which entertained this very young lady. On the other side were obscure birth and low fortune, so that she had no further thought of him other than as an acquaintance. For a year this young man, Matthew Pilkington, made love to her and then managed to get received by Mr. and Mrs. Van Lewen. After a time he seemed to be at their house almost every day, until friends and relations commented upon it. Mr. Van Lewen assured them that he knew nothing of any amorous friendship between Mr. Pilkington and his daughter, but since such a report had been spread he would civilly forbid him the house.

In reality Matthew Pilkington was socially Letitia's equal, as far as attainments went. He was born in 1700, or possibly somewhat later. Letitia says his father kept a public house; while her son John says in his own memoirs that his paternal grandfather was a "mechanical genius"—otherwise a watchmaker. Whatever his trade, he was a sufficiently wise man to give his son an excellent education, for in 1717 the youth entered Trinity College, became a scholar in 1721 and graduated B.A. in 1722. At the time that he first met Letitia he was reader in the parish in which Dr. Lewen lived; and he seems to have begun his wooing by inviting Letitia and her young friends to an organ recital by himself, followed by a little collation of

fruit and wine, etc., in the vestry; after which he began to address her in a very passionate style and asked leave to visit her. Following upon this, the first step, it was easy to gain Mrs. Van Lewen's liking.

When that lady gave Matthew her husband's message as to discontinuing his visits, he showed remarkable presence of mind; without a moment of hesitation he fell pale and speechless to the floor, overwhelming the girl with fright.

"I raised him in my arms," she says, "and senseless as he seemed, he grasped me close, and leaned his drooping head upon my bosom; whilst my mother applied remedies to him till he revived. When he came to himself, he blamed us for our care, saying, 'Since I was lost, he could not, would not, live.'"

Dr. Van Lewen arranged for his little daughter to go and stay a year with her grandfather in Cork, but meanwhile the disconsolate lover had prevailed upon her to promise to be his. As soon as she heard that she was to be banished she sent her young brother with a note to tell Matthew, and the boy came back full of excitement. "Mr. Pilkington has stabbed himself—with a penknife!" Letitia would have rushed off to save his life, but her mother restrained her, and sent for him to come to them.

Writing more than twenty years later, when her feeling for her husband was one of scornful malice, she says that she could scarcely contain her laughter at her own credulity, for he had given himself "a scratch, on purpose to terrify us, and had just such a desperate wound as I have frequently received from the point of a pin."

The disconsolate lover swore that wherever Letitia went he would follow, even to the West Indies; that he was heir to a good estate (the most prevailing argument he could have made use of, adds Letitia). Mrs. Van Lewen succumbed completely. She kept him to supper, and gave him the key of the garden, so that he could enter the house whenever he pleased. When mother and daughter were

alone, the former told the latter that neither she nor her husband really objected to him; though the world thought they were well off, they were unable to give their daughter a portion, and as Matthew obviously loved her very sincerely she had better marry him, adding:

"We shall at first seem displeased and then forgive it, and do for you everything in our power . . . and you shall both live with us till he gets a living."

The next evening Letitia found Mr. Pilkington with her father, "his harpsichord placed in the parlour, which, with a cat and an owl, were all his worldly goods."

Letitia's age at that time is a little obscure, it having been variously said that at her marriage she was thirteen, fifteen, eighteen and twenty-eight—the last is by those who put her birth at the year 1700. Judging however by the date of her first introduction to Swift, her marriage must have been in the autumn of 1728, or the spring of 1729. The earlier date is the more likely.

The evening that Matthew Pilkington arrived to take up his abode in Dr. Van Lewen's house, they were married by the Vicar-General in the presence of her father and mother, and of Matthew's father. They went for a fortnight into the country to stay with the bride's uncle, Brigadier Meade. There Matthew had the pleasure of indulging in the pursuit of game, or, as Letitia put it, "in fowling." She being separated from him for a whole day, wrote the following ingenious poem, "my first attempt which was not quite childish," she says.

THE PETITION OF THE BIRDS

Ah, shepherd, gentle shepherd! spare
Us plumed inhabitants of the air
That hop and inoffensive rove
From tree to tree, from grove to grove;
What frenzy has possessed your mind
To be destructive of your kind?

Admire not if we kindred claim,
Our sep'rate natures are the same:
To each of us thou ow'st a part
To grace thy person, head, or heart;
The chaste, the fond, the tender *Dove*
Inspires thy breast with purest love;
The tow'ring *Eagle* claims a part
In thy courageous, gen'rous heart;
On thee the *Finch* bestowed a voice
To bid the raptured soul rejoice;
The *Hawk* has giv'n thee eyes so bright,
They kindle love and soft delight;
Thy snowy hue and graceful mien
May in the stately *Swan* be seen;
The *Robin's* plumes afford the red
Which thy soft lips and cheeks bespread;
The filial piety and the truth
The *Stork* bestowed to crown thy youth.
Did we these sev'ral gifts bestow
To give perfection to a foe?
Did we so many virtues give
To thee, too fierce to let us live?
Suspend your rage, and every grove
Shall echo songs of grateful love.
Let pity soothe and sway your mind,
And be the Phœnix of mankind.

Matthew, "with the raptures of an enamoured bridegroom, read this to every person he encountered." And yet it was not many years later that Letitia's facility in verse was to be one of the provocatives that brought the couple to the separation point.

When the two young people returned to Dr. Van Lewen's house Mrs. Van Lewen faithfully carried out her plan of telling everyone that they had married without parental consent, and she told it so often that she got to believe it, and made it a cause of quarrel both in private

and public. It seems as though before the wedding she had been absorbed in the delight of arranging a marriage, but when that was accomplished, she began to realise that she had saddled herself with a stranger in her household, and one who was of a somewhat quarrelsome nature. For a time, however, there seemed no way out of the difficulty for Matthew's income would not have paid for a ready furnished lodging.

A certain relief came from a girl who was studying obstetrics under Dr. Van Lewen, but whose maiden name is not given. She was a wonderful person, being the child of poor country people, but so well educated that she knew Hebrew, Greek, Latin and French, and understood mathematics as well as most men. Poetry came naturally to her, but the work which brought her most fame was an edition of Tacitus, dedicated in elegant Latin to Lord Carteret. Constantia, which was her Christian name, married before she was twenty a Dublin printer named Grierson, and became a friend of Swift, Dr. Delany and Thomas Sheridan. She and Letitia were friends, and when she saw how uneasy was Letitia's life she got Dr. Delany, then Prebendary of St. Patrick's Cathedral, to help oil the wheels. His plan was simple. Preaching one day at the church at which the Lewens attended, he joined them on their walk home that he might wish the bride happiness, and invited them all to dine at Delville, his villa outside Dublin. Mrs. Van Lewen's vanity was touched, and for a time there was no more trouble.

It was Dr. Delany who introduced Matthew to Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, and he was somewhat taken with the young poetical man. As time went on Letitia envied her husband because of this privilege, and sought for means of being included in the circle round the Dean, but it was some time before she got her desire. She writes:

"I at last told them (for, to give me my due, I was pretty pert) that truly they were envious, and would not let me see the Dean, knowing how much I surpassed them

all. As I spoke this but half serious I set them all a-laughing."

The next day, November 30th (1729), was the Dean's birthday, so she wrote some verses congratulating him, which ended with:

> "Behold in Swift revived appears
> The virtues of unnumbered years;
> Behold in him with new delight
> The patriot, bard and sage unite;
> And know, Ierne in that name
> Shall rival Greece and Rome in fame."

Dr. Delany presented the poem to the great man and told him of Letitia's pert speech; whereupon the Dean said he would see her whenever she pleased. A little later Swift intimated to Delany that he would dine with him on a certain date, and would like to meet Mr. and Mrs. Pilkington at his table. Mrs. Barber (Dublin's chief poetess, according to Swift) was also invited. She called for Letitia, and arriving at Delville, presented her to the Dean "on a noble terrace whose summit was crowned with a magnificent portico, where paintings and sculpture displayed their utmost charms."

Swift on seeing them asked Mrs. Barber if this were her daughter, and when she said, "No, it is Mrs. Pilkington——"

"What?" says he, "this poor child married! God help her, she is early engaged in trouble!"

Letitia adds to this: "We passed the day in the most elegant and delightful manner."

III

The Dean did Matthew the honour of asking him to preach one Sunday at the Cathedral, and—with his wife—to dine with him afterwards. From Letitia's *Memoirs* we learn much of the day's happenings:

"Service being over, we met the Dean at the church door, surrounded by a crowd of poor, to all of whom he gave charity, excepting one old woman, who held out a very dirty hand to him: he told her very gravely: 'That though she was a beggar, water was not so scarce but she might have washed her hands.' And so we marched with the silver verge before us to the Deanery House."

Arriving there, Swift, who evidently looked upon Letitia as a child, took her into his library, saying, "I have brought you here to show you all the money I got when I was in the Ministry, but do not steal any of it.' 'I will not indeed, sir,' says I; so he opened a cabinet and showed me a whole parcel of empty drawers. 'Bless me,' says he, 'the money is flown.'" He then displayed some trinkets and medals and amused her till they were summoned to dinner.

Swift sat at the head of the table opposite a huge pier glass, under which was a marble table, so that he could see in the glass what the servants did. "He was served entirely on plate, and with great elegance," but alas! the beef was overdone! He called for the "cook-maid" and told her to take the meat away and do it less, and she answered "very innocently" that she could not.

"Why, what sort of a creature are you to commit a fault which cannot be amended?" Then turning to Letitia he added that he hoped, as the cook was a woman of genius, he should, by this manner of arguing, be able in about a year's time to convince her she had better send up the meat too little than too much done.

The next trouble was, that happening to see in the mirror his butler helping himself to the first glass from a bottle of ale, and mix what was left with that intended for the guests, the Dean cried: "Ha! friend, sharp's the word, I find; you drank my ale, for which I stop two shillings of your board wages this week, for I scorn to be outdone in anything, even in cheating."

"Dinner at last was over, to my great joy," writes the little bride, who had felt great discomfort at the constant

scolding. But there were further experiences to come, of a more or less amusing nature.

"'Pray, Mrs. Pilkington, tell me your faults,' says the Dean.

"'Indeed, sir, I must beg to be excused, for, if I can help it, you shall never find them out.'

"'No!—then Mr. Pilkington shall tell me.'

"'I will, sir,' says he, 'when I have discovered them.'

"'Pray, Mr. Dean,' says Dr. Delany, 'why will you be so impolite as to suppose Mrs. Pilkington has any faults?'

"'Why, whenever I see a number of agreeable qualities in any person, I am always sure they have bad ones sufficient to poise the scale.'

"I bowed," writes Letitia, "and told the Dean that he did me great honour!"

Swift made coffee for the party, saying that when he was Chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley, who was in the Government here, he was so poor he was obliged to keep a coffee-house, and all the nobility resorted to it to talk treason. "I could not help smiling at this oddity, but I really had such an awe on me that I could not venture to ask him, as I longed to do, what it meant."

The coffee being made, Swift turned to the parson—"Mr. Pilkington, you would not tell me your wife's faults. But I have found her out to be a damned, insolent, unmannerly slut."

Poor Letitia was confounded, not knowing how she had offended.

Says Mr. Pilkington: "Ay, sir, I must confess she is a little saucy to me sometimes, but—what has she done now?"

"Done! why nothing but sit there quietly, and never once offered to interrupt me in making the coffee; whereas had I had a lady of modern good breeding here, she would have struggled with me for the coffee-pot till she had made me scald myself and her, and throw the coffee in the fire

—or perhaps at her head—rather than permit me to take so much trouble for her."

This made Letitia's spirits rise, and she began to learn that the Dean always prefaced a compliment with an affront. She got into disgrace once again that evening. "The Dean told us he gave us leave to stay for supper, which from him was a sufficient invitation." He then took out of his pocket a little gold corkscrew with which he opened a bottle of wine and decanted it. The last glass he offered to Matthew, saying, "I always keep some poor parson to drink the foul wine for me." Pilkington, who must have been familiar with the Dean's ways by then, answered equably that he did not know the difference, but was glad to get a glass at any rate.

"Why then," said Swift, "you shan't, for I'll drink it myself; why, pox take you, you are wiser than a paltry curate whom I asked to dine with me a few days ago; for upon my making the same speech to him, he told me he did not understand such usage, and so walked off without his dinner. By the same token I told the gentleman who recommended him to me that the fellow was a blockhead, and I had done with him."

Then wanting to go on with his business of drawing corks, the Dean could not find his corkscrew and looking at Letitia told her very sternly that he believed she had stolen it, whereupon she affirmed very seriously that she had not; and it was found where he had placed it.

"'Tis very well for you,' says he, 'that I have got it, or I would have charged you with theft.'

"'Why, pray sir, should I be suspected more than any other person in the company?'

"'For a very good reason, because you are the poorest.'"

The evening wore to a close and Dean Swift handed Letitia down the steps and into the coach, thanking them both for the honour of their company, "at the same time sliding into my hand as much money as Mr. Pilkington and I had given in the morning, and coach-hire also, which

I durst not refuse lest I should have been deemed as great a blockhead as the parson who refused the thick wine."

From that time on for about eight years the Dean befriended the Pilkingtons, having Letitia often with him. She arranged his correspondence, for he kept every letter he received, read his work, walked with him, and amused him with her vivacious tongue. She ascribes his friendship to his increasing deafness, which made him lessen his circle of friends, and become dependent upon those with whom he could be at ease. One day he said:

"Come, we will take a walk in Naboth's vineyard."

"Where may that be, pray, sir?"

"Why, a garden that I cheated one of my neighbours out of."

They went into a square field enclosed with a wall, and she asked, "Pray, sir, where is the garden?"

"Look behind you," said he.

Then she saw that the south wall was covered with fruit trees, which, being in blossom, looked very beautiful and she remarked upon it.

"Why, I thought you were looking at the *wall!* It is the best in Ireland! When the masons were building it I watched them very close, and as often as they could they put in a rotten stone, of which however I took no notice till they had built three or four perches beyond it; now as I am an absolute Monarch in the Liberties,* and King of the Mob, my way with them was to have the wall thrown down to the place where I observed the rotten stone, and by doing so five or six times the workmen were at last convinced it was their interest to be honest."

Signs of rain coming on, Letitia remarked upon it to him. "I hope not," said he, "for that will cost me sixpence for a coach for you. Come, make haste: Oh how the tester trembles in my pocket!" They got home before the rain began, and the Dean cried: "Thank God, I have saved my money. Here, you fellow (to his servant),

* *Liberties* belonging to the Deanery.

carry this sixpence to the lame old man that sells gingerbread at the corner, because he tries to do something, and does not beg." Once in the house, the Dean passed his guest on to his housekeeper, while he "took out his walk indoors"; which he did by violently running up one flight of stairs and down another until he had accomplished what he considered a sufficient distance.

One day Swift told Matthew that if he did not take down his wife's pride there would be no bearing with her.

"Indeed, sir," said Pilkington, "'tis your fault that she is so conceited: she was always disposed to be saucy, but since you have done her the honour to take notice of her, and make her your companion, there is no such thing as mortifying her."

"Very fine! I have got much by complaining to you, to have all your wife's faults laid at my door."

"Well, sir," said I; "all these misdemeanours may be included under the article of Pride; now, let me know my other crime."

"Why, you can't walk fast; but at present I excuse you."

"Well, sir, if I can't mend my pride, I'll try to mend my pace."

"Mr. Pilkington," said he, "I have a mind to clip your wife's wit."

"Indeed, sir," said I, "that's death by law, for 'tis sterling."

"Shut up your mouth for all day, Letty, for that answer is real wit," said her husband.

"Nay," said the Dean, "I believe we had better shut up our own, for at this rate she'll be too many for us."

Letitia was not ungrateful or unreasonable: "If I have any merit as a writer, I must gratefully acknowledge it due to the pains he (Dean Swift) took to teach me to think and speak with propriety; though to tell the truth, he was a very rough sort of a tutor for one of my years and sex; for whenever I made use of an inelegant phrase, I was sure of

a deadly pinch, and frequently received chastisement before I knew my crime. However, I am convinced, had he thought me incorrigibly dull, I should have escaped without correction; and the black and blue flowers I received at his hands were meant for merit, though bestowed on me."

In her third volume of memoirs Letitia tells a further story of the Dean which betrays his odd sense of fun, and which is as outspoken as the custom of those times were. Swift was staying during Christmas at Belcamp, the house of Doctor Gratton, and wrote to invite Dr. Delany, mighty Tom Thumb, and her serene Highness of Lilliput to dine with him, meaning Matthew and Letitia. They went, and Letitia hid her face when Swift came out to receive them. Matthew said the Doctor and himself had picked up a girl in the road whom they would like to bring in. "Let her show her face, and, if she be likely we'll admit her," replied Swift. She put down her fan, saying, "Oh indeed, sir, I am." So he took her hand and led her into the parlour where twelve clergymen were assembled, saying to them: "Those fellows coming in had brought a wench with them; but we'll give her a dinner, poor devil! and keep the secret of our brethren."

In conversation Swift turned upon her, saying:

"'Pox on you, you slut, you gave me a hint for my *Polite Conversation* which I have pursued: you said it would be better to throw it into dialogue, and suppose it to pass amongst the great, I have improved by you.'

"'Oh, dear sir,' said I, 'tis impossible you should do otherwise.' 'Matchless sauciness!' returned he. 'Well, but I'll read you the work,' which he did with infinite humour, to our high entertainment.

"It was Christmas time (1730) and froze very hard. The Dean, meditating revenge, set the wine before a great fire, the corks of the wine being secured with pitch and rosin, which began in a little time to melt: no sooner did the Dean perceive they were fit for his purpose but he

slyly rubbed his fingers on them, and daubed my face all over. Instead of being vexed, as he expected I would, I told him he did me great honour in sealing me for his own. 'Plague on her,' said he, 'I can't put her out of temper;' yet he seemed determined to do it if possible, for he asked the company if ever they had seen such a dwarf; and insisted that I should pull off my shoes, till he measured me: to this I had no inclination to submit, but he was an absolute prince, and resistance would have little availed me: so, when I obeyed, he said: 'Why, I suspected you had either broken stockings or foul toes, and in either case should have delighted to have exposed you.' He then made me stand up against the wainscot, leaned his hand as heavy as he could upon my head, till I shrunk under the weight to almost half my proportion; then making a mark with his pencil, he affirmed I was but three feet two inches high.

"Dinner was brought up, and I, being like Mrs. Qualmsick, the curate's wife, always a-breeding, could not eat any. The gentlemen, guessing at my circumstances by my decreasing face and increasing waist, were so over-obliging to know what I liked best, that at last I told the Dean I wished I were a man, that I might be treated with less ceremony.

"'Why,' said the Dean, 'it may be you are.'

"'I wish, sir, you would put the question to the company, and accordingly to their votes, let my sex be determined.'

"'I will,' said he, 'Pilkington, what say you?'

"'A man, sir!'

"They all took his word; and, in spite of petticoats, I was made a man of after dinner: I was obliged to put a tobacco-pipe in my mouth; but they so far indulged me as to let it be an empty one, as were the Dean's, Doctor Delany's and my husband's. The Dean asked me could I play cribbage, then said he would not play with a beggar,

for he should stand no chance; for, if he won he would not take the money, and if he lost he must in honour pay.

" ' But why a beggar, Mr. Dean? ' said Doctor Delany.

" ' A married curate must of consequence be a beggar,' returned he; ' and you are another; and, pox on me! if I can ever get acquainted with any persons but beggars; and I don't think but this woman, or man here, is in the way of producing another.'

" ' Then, sir, I hope you will be so kind to stand godfather, which will secure it from so hard a fate.'

" ' So,' said he, ' more demands upon me! Well, if it be a boy, I don't much care if I do, but, if it be a little bitch, I'll never answer for her.' "

Mr. Elrington Ball, the editor of Swift's Correspondence says of this story that there " must be some vein of truth in it, and of the date there is no doubt." Letitia wrote her account nineteen years later and could hardly have been absolutely accurate about the affair; also in her third volume of memoirs she may well have mixed up events and dates, and somewhat embroidered the stories she told. In any case the baby was not born until August, 1731, lived five days and was buried on August 28. Swift was away from Dublin at the time, but went to see Letitia on his return. He asked where was his godson elect and she replied " In Heaven."

" The Lord be praised," said he, " I thought there was some good news in the way—your husband looked so brisk. Pox take me! but I was in hopes you were dead yourself; but 'tis pretty well as it is; I have saved by it, and I should have got nothing by you." He drank a little caudle with her before leaving. About an hour later his servant arrived with a large bundle of brown paper tied round with many yards of pack thread and a note which ran: " Madam, I send you a piece of plum cake, which I did intend should be spent at your christening; if you have any objection to the plums, or do not like to eat them, you may return them to, Madam, your sincere friend and

servant, J. Swift." The parcel contained gingerbread cake in which were stuck four guineas, each wrapped in white paper, with " plum " written upon it.

This son was Letitia's third child, she already had a boy named William and a girl named Elizabeth.

IV

Before this the Pilkingtons had got into a house of their own. Mrs. Van Lewen was scarcely the woman to give extended hospitality to anyone; and from what is known of Matthew, he would scarcely have played the part of affectionate son-in-law for long. Feud arose between them, until constant quarrels made life unendurable for everyone. At this juncture the elder Pilkington showed his kindliness by securing a tiny house on Lazar Hill for his son. The little dwelling matched the little people who went to live in it. Swift wrote of the Pilkingtons in October, 1730, when projecting the *Dublin Miscellany,* " and a little, young poetical parson, who has a littler, young poetical wife, shall have the whole profit."

The diminutive size of the Pilkington couple was a standing joke in Swift's circle; in February, 1732, Matthew wrote in a letter: " The Dean designs to trouble Dr. Delany to buy a convenient microscope that he may find out both myself and my house with greater ease than he can at present, because we are both so excessively small, that he can scarce discover either."

The small house, however, had a large garden, which Matthew laid out in " beautiful taste, and built a delightful summerhouse in it, fit indeed for a nobleman." The bounty of friends who came a-house-warming filled the place with " elegant furniture," and so at last the Pilkingtons settled into a home of their own. Matthew at that time secured a curacy, and also became chaplain to Lady Claremont, which with an allowance made by Dr. Van Lewen, gave them an income of about £100.

The Dean was their guest one day at dinner in the Lilliputian Palace, as he called it, and having just looked into the parlour he ran up into the garret, into the bedchamber and library and thence down into the kitchen; "and well it was for me that the house was very clean;" says Letitia, "for the Dean said it was his custom to do this; and 'twas from the cleanliness of the garret and kitchen that he judged of the housewifery of the mistress, for even a slut would have the entertainment rooms clean."

Matthew's matriculation entry states that he was born in 1700, but Swift says in 1732 that he was some years under thirty, and Letitia herself comments on her husband's extreme youth. He may have falsified his age in order to get his ordination quickly. Certainly he seems to have been particularly youthful. He married without feeling any responsibility for either himself or his wife; and it is doubtful whether he had any income at all at that time. He played on his harpsichord, read the lessons, and wrote poems, a thin volume of which was published in Dublin in 1730, and during the following year in London. Mr. F. Elrington Ball praises these poems in a somewhat negative way as "by no means contemptible." Matthew also wrote at this time a pamphlet, *An Infallible Scheme to pay the Public Debt of the Nation in Six Months* by putting a tax on vice, such as perjury, fornication, drunkenness, swearing, slander, etc., etc. He was a man of ideas as his work eventually showed, but he was also one devoid of imagination and so he never knew how to deal with men and women; and so, also, there has never been anyone who has attempted to whitewash his character. It is possible that he was not quite so bad as Letitia painted him and as he has always been adjudged, for she had an illusive touch in exaggeration. No one can prove that she exaggerated, yet she tells so many forceful stories, and it is so easy to round off the point of a story by a little inventiveness.

By the time little Jonathan Pilkington peeped into this world and flitted from it Matthew had grown very jealous of his wife's abilities. One day an injudicious friend complimented him on having a wife who could write better than himself, thinking that he would be delighted to hear her praised. And after that it would be: "Oh, my dear! a lady of your accomplishments. Why, Mr. Smith says you write better than I; and to be sure he is a great judge!"

The Dean added to his chagrin one day by putting a question first to Letitia and later to Matthew concerning the point that "every man should write his own English."

"To be sure, sir," said Letitia.

"Ay, to be sure, sir, you give me an answer, and I am sure you do not understand my meaning."

"Very possibly, sir; but I certainly understand my own, when I have any."

"Well, then, what do you understand by writing one's own English?"

"Why, really, sir, not to confine oneself to a set of phrases, as some of our ancient English historians, Camden in particular, seem to have done, but to make use of such words as naturally occur on the subject."

Pilkington entered at that moment and the Dean put the problem to him, who answered, "To be sure a man ought to write good English."

"Nay, but his own English—I say his own: what do you understand by that?"

"Why, sir, what should I understand?"

"Pox on you for a dunce," said the Dean, "were your wife and you to sit for a fellowship, I would give her one sooner than admit you a sizar."

"And now, my business was completely done!" writes Letitia. But in fact she put the finishing touch to it herself by writing in competition with Matthew an ode of which the opening stanzas ran:

"I envy not the proud their wealth,
Their equipage and state;
Give me but innocence and health,
I ask not to be great.

"I in this sweet retirement find
A joy unknown to kings,
For sceptics to a virtuous mind
Seem vain and empty things."

She showed hers to her husband thinking he would praise it; but he was very angry, the Dean had made her mad, he said, the lines were nonsense, a needle became a woman better than a pen. So to bring him to a better temper she threw her poem into the fire and praised his ode highly.

Looking back upon her life Letitia says, "Five years rolled insensibly away, in a kind of tolerable happiness."

Matthew spent rather more than a year of the five in London. He had developed an overmastering desire to get away, to taste the sweets of London while he was young, and had talked to the Dean about it; and he who knew most of London's doings promised to help him.

Alderman Barber—Mrs. Manley's "protector"—was now London's senior Alderman, and in November was to be elected Lord Mayor for 1732-1733. So Swift recommended Matthew to him, saying "I value Mr. Pilkington as much for his modesty, as his learning and sense or any good quality he has." In another letter he says, "he is some years under thirty, but has more wit, sense and discretion than any of your London parsons, ten years above his age."

In the *Life* of Alderman Barber we are told that on becoming Lord Mayor he was persuaded to accept as a chaplain a young man, who though born in Ireland, came of an ancient English family, an ancestor of his, Sir Thomas Pilkington, having been three times Lord Mayor of London in the reign of King William.

Letitia did not know of this ancestor—nor did anyone else! But it was helpful to the Rev. Matthew, who managed to get a larger sum from the Mayor and Corporation than the chaplain usually got. The sermon which Matthew preached on the day of Barber's election he had printed; and "it met with the approbation it justly deserved."

Letitia, writing of her husband's departure says: "I was very desirous of going with him; but he told me plainly he did not want such an encumbrance as a wife, and that he did not intend to pass there for a married man; and that in short he could not taste any pleasure where I was." She was astonished, having believed that he was just bad tempered when he treated her with ill-nature; "I could hardly give him credit for his words," she says.

The next day he departed, leaving his wife and three children almost without adieu but he seems to have repented by the time he got to Chester, for thence he sent her a very kind letter.

Swift had written to Pope about Matthew, telling him, "The utmost stretch of his ambition is to gather up as much superfluous money as will give him a sight of you and half an hour of your presence." The Dean knew how to flatter; and the result on Pope was that he invited the young parson to stay a fortnight with him, much to his regret, for he wrote to Swift shortly after that Matthew was a most forward, conceited fellow, that he was sick of his impertinence before the end of the third day, and more to the same purpose.

Swift gave Letitia the letter to read and she defended her husband, whereat Swift raged and stormed, terrifying her; then she burst into tears and she thought he was going to beat her, but fortunately someone called upon the Dean and she escaped. In the morning she wrote to him, concluding after a conciliatory beginning, with, "even if I was partial to Mr. Pilkington, I hope it was the most pardonable error a wife could be guilty of."

The messenger returned at once with a letter:

Madam,

You must shake off the leavings of your sex. If you cannot keep a secret and take a chiding, you will quickly be out of my sphere. Corrigible people are to be chid: those who are otherwise may be very safe from any lectures of mine: I should rather choose to indulge them in their follies than attempt to set them right. I desire you may not inform your husband of what has passed, for a reason I shall give you when I see you, which may be this evening, if you will. I am very sincerely, your friend, J. SWIFT."

Letitia waited on the Dean about five o'clock, and he received her with great kindness, saying he would write and advise Matthew, but "should you acquaint him with this letter of Pope's, he might perhaps resent it to him and make him an enemy."

From his arrival in London Matthew Pilkington went his own way. He should have lived near the Mayoral residence and—as the Lord Mayor said—had he done so "I should now and then have had the favour of his company in an evening." Instead he chose to live out of reach in the Inner Temple, and paid £30 a year for lodgings which would in the City have cost him £10 or £12. Also he kept a man servant. He rarely wrote to the Dean and never answered his questions as to how he lived. The payment for the chaplaincy was by custom made on the termination of the engagement so Swift was somewhat troubled for him; and with his kindliness of heart sent £20 to a friend that Matthew might draw upon it. The Lord Mayor made him a gift of £40, and eventually he received from the City £66, from the Lord Mayor £66, and from the Court of Aldermen £21, which was scarcely enough to warrant his high state of living, but more than any previous chaplain had received.

It was in the early spring that Swift showed Letitia a poem he had written upon his own death and he allowed

her to take it home to read on condition that she returned it by eight o'clock the next morning. She had a remarkable memory, and repeated parts of the poem to friends. Then the Dean sent for her and said she had shown his poem to others, and that someone had published a burlesque upon it in London. She denied this, and was allowed to read the burlesque. He made her read it aloud, and she laughed as she read, telling him that though he had tried to change his style, he had written it himself. He pretended to be angry, said she had neither taste nor judgment, and knew no more of poetry than a horse. She wanted him to give her his word that he did not write it and he scolded her for a dunce.

Later she heard from her husband that the Dean had sent him the poem to have it printed in London, and it appeared on All Fools' Day under the title of *The Life and Genuine Character of the Rev. Dr. S——t, D.S.P.D.* and with a dedication to Pope signed L.M., " from his chambers in the Inner Temple, London." Mr. Elrington Ball, the editor of the correspondence of Swift says that from internal evidence there can be no doubt but that Swift wrote it himself, and that probably his primary motive was to make a fool of " Little Matthew in the Sanctuary " as he sometimes styled Pilkington, and that his success in deluding him and everybody else was far greater than he expected. Matthew however was blamed as being the ungrateful purloiner and spoiler of Swift's poem.

The quiet of her life and the absence of her irritable husband led Letitia into her favourite work of rhyming and she produced a number of poems, one of which she sent to Matthew; and he who, she says, " loved me best at a distance " wrote that her verses were like herself, full of elegance and beauty, and that he heartily wished her in London. Instantly she made up her mind to gratify that wish and left Dublin with some friends, among whom was Mrs. Barber. This lady brought secretly to Matthew six more poems of Swift's, which he was to dispose of—prob-

ably according to a plan of Swift's—and put the money in his pocket.

Among the friends whom Matthew had made in London was James Worsdale, a man whose main interest lay in the theatre, though he was a somewhat popular portrait painter at that time. He was a son of a colour grinder who had worked for Kneller and had introduced the boy to the painter as a servant. Later James became apprentice to his master, mixing his paints, etc., and on Kneller's death claimed to be the artist's illegitimate son. He also claimed to be the author of songs, plays and operas, concerning which both Letitia, Matthew and other people had much to do.

When Letitia got to Parkgate on her journey to London she wrote to her husband, with the result that he met her about four miles from London with a coach, with James Worsdale accompanying him. Letitia says of this:—"Mr. Pilkington treated me very obligingly, and called me his little fugitive and runaway; but a stranger would have thought Mr. Worsdale was my husband, he welcomed me so kindly, and paid me so many compliments."

Worsdale went home with them, and was invited by Matthew to dine there the next evening. Matthew told his wife that he feared she would have a dull time in London as he was much occupied; for he had to attend the Lord Mayor from nine to six, after which he always went to the play, and then supped with Mrs. Heron, an actress ("of no very good fame," says Letitia).

The next night Worsdale came, but Matthew did not return until late at night, which gave Worsdale the opportunity of making extravagant love to Letitia. After he was gone Matthew told his wife that he believed Worsdale was in love with her, that he was a very generous man, and that his liking for her, if well managed, might prove very profitable, for he valued no expense when a lady was in the case.

Matthew planned a trip to Windsor, which meant spending two days and a night in the excursion, and then forced

his wife to go off alone with Worsdale. She was in a state of nerves all the time, believing that both men were in a plot to betray her to ruin.

They had to put up at an inn, and when Letitia wished to go to bed, she found that only one room and one bed had been prepared. Going downstairs again she bitterly reproached Worsdale, who could only prove his innocence by taking another room.

The next morning she says, Worsdale attended her with great respect and brought her safely home. But, she asks, why should her husband have driven her into the toils unless he meant to have made her a victim? "I fairly confess this action greatly sunk him in my esteem. I could scarcely after regard Mr. Pilkington as a husband, but rather as a man whose property I was, and who would gladly dispose of me to the best bidder." It certainly looks as though Matthew had tried to enact in real life the part of the husband in Eliza Haywood's comedy *A Wife to Let*.

In November, 1733, Letitia returned to Dublin alone, for Matthew was in hopes that Edward Walpole (presumably the second son of Sir Robert Walpole) would take him up and enable him to continue his life in London. Alderman Barber, writing to Swift, said:

"Why Mr. Pilkington should send his wife home in the midst of winter, or why he should stay here an hour after her are questions not easily answered."

By the time these two men parted there was little love in the heart of the ex-Mayor for his chaplain. In the biography of the City-magnate it is stated that he offered Pilkington a considerable gratuity if he would publish something in his praise; but "that gentleman who abhorred his principles and despised him for his follies and vices never would prostitute himself so far as even to pay him a verbal compliment."

Swift asked Matthew to write him an impartial description of Barber, which he did to the delight of the Dean. One paragraph runs: "His intimate friends he treats like

his dependents; his dependents like his footmen, and his footmen like his slaves. He is profuse of promises; but the moment he has uttered them they are forgotten. Like the Lord in the Tale of the Tub, he is at all times so ready to give his word that he never can keep it. If ever he repents it is only for accidental or extorted liberality."

There was much more, all of which Swift read out to Dr. Delany, Mrs. Barber, the poet and others. Mrs. Barber asked to read it through again, memorised as much as possible and wrote it to an old lady, a friend of Barber's, requesting her to read it to the Alderman. Female Judas! is the comment of the writer of John Barber's life.

The six poems which Matthew had received from Dublin by the agency of Mrs. Barber and had duly published, were some of a treasonably political character and the others—it is difficult to say what was wrong with them, but they seem to have been indelicate, one being about a lady in her bed-chamber, which was however quite an ordinary subject in those days. The printing of these poems caused a veritable storm. The publisher, printer and bookseller were taken into custody, and then Mrs. Barber, Pilkington and Benjamin Motte were secured. On their examination full proof was given that Swift was the author, and he could not be touched. Everyone believed that Matthew had, with Mrs. Barber's help, betrayed Swift by surreptitiously publishing his work, and in Dublin the greatest indignation was felt and expressed.

One day someone remarked in Letitia's hearing that he was surprised to see Mrs. Pilkington looking so cheerful seeing her husband was in the Bastille; and a little later she saw by the papers what had happened. She was broken hearted, for it deprived her of any hope that in the future he could provide for his family. No one in the place would speak to her except Archbishop Hoadly, who always kept a friendship for Matthew; for everyone resented on her what they regarded as the betrayal of the Dean by her husband.

And the Dean kept silence; he may have intended a satire at the most; it was more like a tragedy to at least two of the victims. Letitia knew, and writes, "In my soul I believe Mr. Pilkington was innocent, and I am sure I have no reason to be partial to him." The Archbishop believed her word, told her to send for her husband to come over, and mind his duty and he would be a friend to him, and further invited her to his table every day. Letitia induced her father to give her £20 for Matthew and he returned dejected and looking like a ghost, to be stung daily by the abuse published about him. "As he frequently wept, I could not forbear mingling my tears with his," she writes.

At this point she swears, "as I shall answer it to God," that so far there had been no breach with her husband, nor was she guilty of any dishonour, though cruel and scandalous aspersions were cast upon her.

She had however suffered badly in health and became very ill. She was sent to her uncle Mr. Van Lewen a doctor in Cork where she stayed several months. On her return she found that her husband and father had had a serious quarrel. Matthew said she was not to go within her father's doors; she did go, and was received with great coldness; and when she made other endeavours neither parent wished to see her.

On Sunday she went to dine with some friends who seemed much embarrassed, slipping into another room to discuss some vexed point. Just as dinner was served Matthew appeared and said bluntly: "I am not come to dinner, but to tell you your father is stabbed."

This accident had happened at nine in the morning, but her mother and sister had sent her no word. Letitia went at once to her old home, and having with difficulty got into the house, her mother and sister both resorted to violence to keep her out of her father's room. When the doctors left him she stole in. How the "accident" happened no one knew, but Dr. Van Lewen had been stabbed in the lungs, and there seemed no hope for him. The

newspapers reported that he was using a case knife, which slipped and the point entered his side; Letitia seems to have thought that he had tried to commit suicide. For three days Mrs. Van Lewen managed by craft to keep Letitia out of the sick room, and then at night she stole in, and found him in a very cold sweat. As he complained of thirst, and was so deadly cold Letitia mixed some hock and sack in a warm drink, and continued to give it him through the night, which at last threw him into a deep sleep. He was better in the morning and continued to get stronger for some weeks, then suddenly relapsed and died.

So passed from Letitia's life the one who had afforded the only haven of love and peace that she knew. Her mother went to live in the country and the two never met again.

V

The Pilkingtons seemingly settled down in their little house, Matthew retaining his curacy. London had not made him more easy to deal with; he had shunned his wife there for the company of an actress, and now in Dublin he sought the company of a certain Widow Warren. In his later dealings with his wife he accused her from the lofty pinnacle of virtue, but the impression he left in London was not flattering to his own probity. In April, 1734, Bolingbroke wrote to Swift:

"Pray, Mr. Dean, be a little more cautious in your recommendations. I took care, a year ago, to remove some obstacles that might have hindered the success of one of your recommendations, and I have heartily repented ever since. The fellow wants morals, and, as I hear, decency sometimes."

Before Letitia went to London she had given birth to a fourth child, who was christened John Carteret Pilkington; and it seems that another, which lived but a short time, was born after the return to Dublin. It was a little before its death that Matthew sent for her one morning to

breakfast in the summer house; and on entering it she was confounded to see a gallant there dressed out in the utmost magnificence. She would have retired but her husband made her come in and make the tea, and soon said he must go to see some sick person, requesting her to keep this gentleman until his return. The man then began to talk "in a most bombastic style, with fustian from exploded plays," caught her hand and wanted her to kiss him and Letitia thought he had gone mad. She got rid of him with difficulty, and her husband seemed much offended with her on his return.

On the morning that her baby was buried she sat weeping in the summer house when the same man, Mr. H——d, appeared with a message that she should prepare some coffee against Matthew's return. She insisted upon going into the house, and the man "fell into his old vagaries" again. She burst into tears and spoke of his insolence. He was greatly surprised and told her that Mr. Pilkington had described her as a lady very liberal of her favours, and begged he would be so kind as to make him a cuckold, so that he might be able to prove it, in order to gain a separation. He went away saying he was convinced that Matthew was a very great villain and very unworthy of her.

Matthew returned in the middle of the night and she told him Mr. H——d had been to see him. He asked how long he had stayed; "Till I was weary of him." "Why, did he offend you?" "Indeed he did." "How?" "By a great deal of impertinence, not worth relating." "I suppose the coxcomb was repeating his poetry to you?" "No, he spoke nothing of his own; he had a proper authority, I believe, for whatever he said." As she spoke she "looked earnestly" into his face. He was in great confusion, but said no more and got to bed.

The next morning he went away, leaving not a shilling for his household and Letitia heard nothing of him for two months. He took all her books and other things of

hers into the study and locked them up, he locked the garden, preferring it should be ruined rather than his wife and children should enjoy it; the tea chest too was secured, so that Letitia says "I was left like a tame cat, with the liberty of walking about two or three empty rooms."

Further Matthew left his curacy with no one to visit the sick or read the prayers, and "the parish was in an uproar."

Eventually Letitia heard that he had gone to the Widow Warren and wrote him but received no answer. Then he returned and there was a quarrel, which ended with Letitia starting to go and finish the night with the children and he refusing to let her go. In the morning "the children, coming in to ask his blessing," Matthew whipped the girl severely because she resembled her grandmother, and then whipped the poor little boy for being like himself.

From that time there was no peace. There were constant quarrels, of course according to Letitia, provoked always by him. Matthew came home once about midnight and woke his wife to tell her she was a most expensive extravagant woman to put on clean linen every day, whereas Mrs. Warren, who had a thousand a year only changed once a week. "I answered him very carelessly that I supposed that was what charmed him; and therefore: *Dirt to Dirt.*"

At length the slip was made and the ever-watchful Matthew got his will. Says Letitia: "I own myself very indiscreet in permitting any man to be at an unseasonable hour in my bed-chamber; but lovers of learning will, I am sure, pardon me, as I solemnly declare it was the attractive charms of a new book which the gentleman would not lend me but consented to stay till I read it through—that was the sole motive of my detaining him. But the servants, being bribed by their master, let in twelve watchmen at the kitchen window, who, though they might have opened the chamber door, chose rather to break it to pieces, and took the gentleman and myself prisoners."

Considering this as a convincing story, it would have been so much stronger if the twelve watchmen had not troubled to crawl through a window, and had turned the handle of the chamber door rather than have smashed the door for no reason! After one watchman had given Letitia a violent blow on the temple, and another had dragged two of her fingers out of joint Mr. Pilkington, with a cambric handkerchief neatly bound about his neck, entered and begged " the authorized ruffians " not to hurt her. The intrusive gentleman named Adair threw down his sword on the entry of Matthew, who then made two of the watchmen hold him, while " he most courageously broke his head."

This account was given to the world more than ten years after the event, and was a clever attempt to make Pilkington look as small as possible. What was true and what was invented it is impossible to say, but the husband had got what he wanted, and he lost no time over the matter. He told his wife that she must turn out of doors: but seeing that she was fainting he brought up a bottle of wine, and drank both their healths. He invited them to pledge him which they were in no mind to do. " Upon which he took my hand, and very generously made a present of me to the gentleman, who could not in honour refuse to take me, especially as his own liberty was not to be procured on any other terms." Matthew assured them that as soon as the divorce was obtained he would marry them with great pleasure. At the door the gentleman's sword was returned to him and Matthew offered to give his wife a friendly kiss at parting, " which mean piece of dissimulation, so much in the style of Jack Ketch, gave me the utmost contempt for the villain."

So at two in the morning Letitia walked out of the little house for ever, away from her children, away from security, without a penny in her pocket, to live or die as she could.

There was no one in Dublin to whom she could go,

so Mr. Adair took her to his lodgings, " and here we sat like statues till daybreak." Then she realised that all she possessed were the clothes on her back, and wrote to Matthew to send her her wearing apparel. This he sent to the lodging in Abbey Street to which she went in the morning, but sent nothing else; all her personal possessions, even the trinkets of her childhood he retained. Mr. Adair went to London, leaving five guineas for her in the hands of a minister.

The story naturally got abroad, and her name rang through Dublin. She was judged a loose woman by all, and was pestered by rakes and go-between harridans. She fled from one lodging to another, her fears increased by the knowledge that she was near her lying-in. Her very misery made her turn to verse-writing. Of one poem written by her at this time the opening and closing series of couplets ran:

" While sunk in deepest solitude and woe,
My streaming eyes with ceaseless sorrow flow;
While anguish wears the sleepless night away
And fresher grief awaits returning day;
Encompassed round with ruin, want and shame;
Undone in fortune, blasted in my fame;
Lost to the soft, endearing ties of life,
And tender names of daughter, mother, wife——
Can no recess from calumny be found?
And yet can fate inflict a deeper wound. . . .

And thou, once my soul's fondest, dearest part
Who schemed my ruin with such cruel art,
From human laws no longer seek to find
A power to loose that knot which God has joined,
The props of life are rudely pulled away,
And the frail building falling to decay;
My death shall give thee thy desired release,
And lay me down in everlasting peace."

She was driven to writing to her husband for help during her lying-in, and she says he generously sent her a sixpence by her eldest son to put her above the temptations to which want might expose her!

"But when things are at their worst they generally mend; for who should arrive from London but Mr. Worsdale!" He had been regarded as an enemy before, but Letitia was overjoyed at the sight of him, for he went to see her at once on hearing what had happened, and made a proposition to her. If she would devote her genius to his service he would liberally reward her, he said; meaning that as he was ambitious to be thought a poet and playwright he wanted her for a small consideration to write his poems and plays for him. Matthew was already retained by him, and of course Letitia was only too ready to accept his offer. Worsdale's vanity made him desire even his "ghosts" to believe in him, and he would show to Letitia Matthew's verses as his own, and show Matthew her verses as his own, without really deceiving either of them.

In February, 1738, the *Dublin Evening Post* announced:

"Last Tuesday (Feb. 8) came on in the Spiritual Court the trial of Mrs. Letitia Pilkington, alias Van Lewen, for adultery with Mr. Adair, which being fully proved, sentence of divorce was pronounced by Dr. Trotter, Vicar General of the Diocese, and Judge of the Consistorial Court."

The Act of Parliament necessary in those days to render the decree effective was never obtained, so that neither could marry again.

Letitia had made no opposition as Matthew solemnly promised to give her a maintenance; but as soon as the matter was over he refused to allow her anything, and publicly triumphed in having overreached her; so an appeal was lodged and it was decided that Matthew should give her £30 and a small annuity. Of the £30 she received only fifteen, which Worsdale assured her he advanced and never was paid.

After the birth of the child, a daughter, whom Matthew repudiated, came the question of what to do with it; and he advised her to leave it on the parish, which she said nothing would prevail upon her to do. She probably placed it with some woman.

Up to this period Dean Swift had continued his friendship with the Pilkingtons, the world had blamed Matthew as the betrayer of his patron, but Swift knew more about that matter than anyone else and found in it no cause for quarrel. On October 12th, 1736, he had written to Letitia quite in his own style.

"Madam:—You are very captious, for in my last letter, I only said in the beginning 'Madam, you lie!' I have a great deal worse than that to say, when I write to ladies, and my fault is, what my enemies give out, that I use you too well. I send you some fruit of my own planting, and like a fool, I send you the best, though you never give the bearer a farthing; and, when you do, may you never be worth another. Let me know perfectly the condition of your eldest sister. I will wait on you soon, if health will permit me. I am now tolerably, which is more than you can pretend to. My humble service to the little woman's little man. J.S."

The news of the divorce and its cause must have given him a shock, and in writing to the ex-Lord Mayor he says:

"I confess that Dr. Delany the most eminent preacher we have, is a very unlucky recommender; for he forced me to countenance Pilkington, introduced him to me, and praised the wit, virtue and humour of him and his wife; whereas he proved the falsest rogue, and she the most profligate whore in either kingdom. She was taken in the fact by her own husband; he is now suing for a divorce and will not compass it; she is suing for a maintenance and he has none to give her."

After this the Dean erased Matthew Pilkington's name from all the letters and documents which he kept. He was himself far from normal by 1738, being already

attacked by the disease which eventually destroyed his mind. Letitia tells how one day before the break in their association he asked her to give him a bottle from a certain drawer. It was locked and as she was turning the key Swift flew upon her "and beat her most immoderately," crying "Pox take you! *open* the drawer!" She tried again and he struck her so hard that she burst into tears, saying, "Lord, sir! what must I do?" He called her a slut, adding "Would you spoil my lock and break my key?" "Why, sir, the drawer is locked." "Oh! I beg your pardon, I thought you were pulling it out by the key: well, open it and do as I bid you!"

He took the bottle and pulled out a gingerbread of which he offered her a share. She felt quite unable to eat it, but he insisted on threat of another beating, and then demanded that she should take a sip from his bottle. This she found so strong that she entreated him not to ask her. Finding that his persuasion was no good, he threw her down and forced the bottle into her mouth, and she thought the liquor would set her stomach on fire. Then "he gravely went to prayers" in the cathedral.

Before the rupture between the Pilkington's, Matthew wrote for Worsdale a ballad opera based upon Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew,* named *The Cure for a Scold;* to which Letitia had written a flaming prologue. This was performed in Dublin soon after the divorce (of course as Worsdale's work), and the reputed dramatist urged Letitia to go and see it, saying he would secure a box for her and guard her from insult. However when she got there she found the box filled with ladies and one parson. When she entered they rose as one person and went away, one declaring she was like to faint at the sight of the odious creature: so Letitia and the two young daughters of her landlady had the box to themselves.

Her work for Worsdale continued for some time—until, indeed, they had a mighty quarrel. Letitia says that he demanded her furnishing him by return of post with a

hundred ballads, as he had begun to take in subscriptions for them; on receipt of which he would order a gentleman to pay her two guineas. This was an impossible task and her failure to fulfil it drew an impossible letter from Worsdale beginning with "Damn you! sink you! God fire you! I have beggared myself between your scoundrelly husband and you, all to support a little vanity. . . . I could write before I ever saw either of your ugly faces . . . and damn me if you do not send me the ballads, but I will despise and defy you for ever." The postscript to this note was the most extraordinary part of it. "I cannot stir out, for my landlady has beat me through the town with a hot shoulder of mutton which she snatched from the fire, spit and all, only for catching me a little familiar with her daughter." Was this letter genuine? or was it repeated after years from memory and perhaps more than a little distorted? In any case it is the maddest of mad epistles.

Letitia had been planning to go to London, and the break with Worsdale determined her. She applied to Matthew for the money he owed her, and he sent her nine pounds, having sold the chain of her watch and her diamond ring to Mrs. Warren for the promise of forty shillings.

During those weary months in Dublin Letitia had often tried to see her children, but Matthew had always refused to allow her to do so; however, when he believed he was really going to be quit of her near presence, he allowed them to go to her one afternoon under the care of a servant. She would fain have kept the youngest, John, and carried him to London with her, but the servant had very strict orders and took all three away at the appointed time.

At last she started for England, her eyes evermore turned to the shore of Ireland. She was going as an adventuress, and she rarely lacked adventure. Even on board a gentleman, knowing who she was, made a proposal to her of which she writes: "though I did but possess five guineas in the world to carry me up to London, I yet possessed chastity enough to refuse fifty for a night's lodging."

He asked her to dine with him at Parkgate, and on parting said, "Well, madam, you do not know London; you will be undone there."

"Why, sir, I hope you do not imagine I will go into any bad course of life?"

"No, madam, but I think you will sit in your chamber and starve."

She adds, "which upon my word, I have been pretty near doing; and, but that the Almighty raised me one worthy friend, good old Mr. Cibber, to whose humanity I am, under God, indebted both for liberty and life, I had been quite lost."

VI

The world of London was now Letitia's oyster, and one very difficult for her to open. She took a lodging in Bury Street, St. James', under the name of Mrs. Meade, and thence she wrote to Edward Walpole, "a very humane gentleman," she says, and he called to see her. She told him of the volume of poems she wanted to publish if she could get subscriptions for it, and he answered that he would not neglect that; meantime he would give her—and he pulled out his purse and drew forth five guineas. Letitia's heart jumped, but Walpole eyed the guineas thoughtfully, then put them back in his pocket saying that it was not convenient for him to part with them. On which Letitia comments, "indeed, I believe he is a beast without a heart."

As she wanted "to make interest with the great," she removed to St. James' Street itself, taking a lodging exactly opposite White's Club. Here she paid a guinea a week in rent and kept a servant. Happening to see Captain Meade, her cousin, enter the club, she sent a note to him, and he invited her to stay at his house at Hampton Court, where she found "a very sweet dwelling, a pretty wife and four lovely children," all of which helped her to soothe her soul and write poems.

On returning to town she went back to the same lodgings, and there Colley Cibber, the poet laureate, called upon her. Though an old man, he ran up the stairs with the vivacity of a youth of fifteen, and making her a courtly bow, said he was sure she did not know him. Upon which she answered, "Not to know you would argue myself unknown."

Cibber was thenceforth the best friend she had. He interested himself in her writings, interested club men in her needs, suggested subjects for her pen and generally kept an eye on her.

Among the club members was a vain old man, Colonel Duncombe, who had been page to King James when he was Duke of York, and who was always calling upon her. Once he said he wished she would take him into custody, and she replied that she found him most entertaining, that if he would make over all his real and personal estate to her, and dispose of his regiment and give her the money, she would keep him—out of it. He swore a good oath he believed her and liked her for her sincerity. He hired her to write love letters to him that he might "swank" at the club. The men whom she knew bantered her upon writing nice things to an old fellow when there were so many young ones, and she assured them she would oblige them on the same terms as she did the Colonel, who paid her handsomely for her compliments. "Why, Colonel, you told us you supported this lady!" "Ay," he returned, "but you know I am an old liar!"

One evening she heard the Colonel's voice on her stairs and he entered, followed by the Duke of Marlborough. There was something so attractive about the latter for her, that her boasted constancy of mind quite forsook her. "I trembled at his touch, and, though I knew not why, was more disordered at sight of him than ever I had been before in my life. . . . His Grace laid hold of my hand and kissed it, saying it was the sweetest thing in nature to put a lady into a little hurry of spirits."

The Duke remained to chat with Letitia, and for the first time she was afraid for herself, especially when he opened his pocket-book and took out a banknote for £50.

"This was the ordeal, or fiery trial; youth, beauty, nobility of birth, and unsought generosity, attacking at once the most desolate person in the world. His Grace . . . . generously assured me that he was above making any conditions, that I might look up with cheerfulness and not rivet my eyes to the floor, but consider him as a sincere and disinterested friend."

She wrote poems of praise to the great, which she sometimes presented in person, and sometimes the kindly Colley Cibber presented them for her. Someone advised her to apply to the then Archbishop of York for participation in the Royal Bounty: so she made a poem in his honour and took it herself to his door. The servant asked her in, and his Grace came down to see her, insisting upon her taking breakfast with him and his sister, and ended by making her a handsome present. He advised her to apply to the Bishop of Salisbury, who was then the Royal Almoner.

At the Bishop's house she had a very different reception, having to promise the servant half a crown before he would open the door wide enough for her to enter. An old man with a most "unprelatical countenance—for it was full of bubuckles and knots and flames of fire"—came out with her note in his hand; and with an imperious voice asked her if she wrote it, if her name was Meade, and adding, "You are a foreigner and we have beggars enow of our own." Letitia replied that she was born in Dublin, which was part of His Majesty's kingdom. "Why," said he, "you lie; but as you say you are in distress, there's half a crown for you!"

Letitia thanked his Lordship, and turning to the servant said as she had given him some trouble she hoped he would accept that part of the Royal Bounty which had been promised to her; upon which the Bishop told her she was a

saucy, proud, impertinent person!—and with some justice!

Letitia tells with some bluntness of her experience in waiting upon Sir Hans Sloane, the Royal physician. It was a winter's day and snowing violently, and as she wore only a chintz gown, and the journey to Chelsea was far, she arrived at his house wet to the skin. Then she had to wait two hours before being ushered through six or seven rooms to the doctor, who did not even look at her. A woman with a sore-eyed child entered and the doctor tore out with a beard of corn the insides of the child's eyelids under which ordeal the girl fainted, but he said that was good for her. Then he told Letitia if she had bad eyes he would brush them up without charging. When he understood what her errand was and said, "Poor creature! I suppose you want charity; there's half a crown for you," nothing but the fact that she had not a single shilling kept her from being rude; so she pocketed the half-crown and the snub.

On the change of ministry, she addressed to the Right Hon. Henry Pelham some lines which Cibber offered to deliver for her. The next day Cibber came to her and giving her five guineas, asked whether she thought them a sufficient reward for her poetry: indeed, she did.

"Well, then," said he, "Mr. Pelham distinguished thus: 'There are five guineas for the lady's numbers, and five more for the good advice they contain; and tell her, I hope God will always give me grace to follow it.'"

The portion containing the advice ran thus:

"Integrity in fairest light confessed
Lives in the sacred centre of thy breast;
Oh, never, never from her laws depart!
So, reign, confessed, the friend of every heart.
Fixed on her solid base, thy worth shall stand,
And Britons bless thy delegated hand:
Ev'n restless faction shall ensure thy peace,
And only Heaven thy happiness increase."

The gayest part, or rather the only gay part, of Letitia's life must have been that period when she occupied the rooms in St. James' Street. There is one picture of her sprinkling some flower pots in the leads beneath her window and opposite in the club window the Duke of Bolton, Colonel Duncombe and the Earl of Winchilsea pouring out wine and drinking to her. At once she wrote the following and sent it over to the Colonel:

"Your rosy wine
Looks bright and fine;
But yet it does not cheer me:
The cause I guess
Is surely this—
The bottle is not near me.

You show that sight
To give delight,
If I may truly judge ye:
But would ye move
My wit or love,
I beg, sir, I may pledge you."

"Lord Winchilsea bid the Colonel send me all the wine in the house," she says, but the Colonel contented himself by sending a bottle of burgundy.

It is curious to find that Benjamin Victor, who wrote birthday odes and was attached later to the Vice-Regal Court in Dublin as poet laureate of Ireland, employed Letitia to do some of his work for him. Two pieces which she cites were an Ode on the Princess of Wales's birthday, and a Lilliputian Ode on the birthday of little Prince George.* She comments upon this: "I know not what reward the gentleman got for these, but he gave me five shillings; and as, since my return to Ireland, he was twice so civil to write me word I was a fool, I must insist on it he was a much greater to apply to a fool for wit."

She found the summers in London terrible times, for

* Afterwards King George III.

all her clients and friends were out of town. One year when her distress was very keen, she asked Dr. Turnbull, a clergyman and a relation of her landlady's, staying in the same house, to write to Matthew and ask him to remit what was still due on the agreement.

An answer was received, signed J. Walsh, which ran:

"Sir,—In the absence of my client, Mr. Pilkington, I received your letter; and he would have you to know the woman you mention is not his wife, nor has he anything to say to the infamous wretch; she fled from Ireland, where she ought to have been executed, for killing her father, three of her bastards, and poisoning her husband. It does not become a clergyman to countenance a common prostitute; if she owes you any money, you may put her in jail; for I do assure you it will never be paid by Mr. Pilkington."

It is so incredible a letter that it is difficult to comment upon it; but it seems that Matthew had done his best to spread a belief that his wife was dead, as he was anxious to marry again. Letitia reproduces another letter written at that time from a David Lambert in Dublin, who had heard that she was still alive. He told her that Mr. Pilkington was paying his addresses to a young lady, and had often declared that his wife and two younger children were dead. They had found this to be false about the children, and wanted to be certain about the wife. The letter ended with fair promises, and she replied, but never heard again from the writer.

That Letitia called herself Mrs. Meade while in London gave her husband a very good chance of describing himself as a widower; and, on the other hand, of libelling Mrs. Pilkington. There was at the time a certain Nancy Pilkington, cousin to Matthew, in London, whose father lived in Pill Lane, and Letitia says "was as common a prostitute as ever traversed the Hundreds of Drury."

So Mrs. Pilkington was dead—but if she were not dead—then evidently she was a profligate woman!

During this period Letitia fell ill of a fever, and seems to have been in danger of her life; during her delirium she called incessantly for her children; and when told of this she seemed to remember some wild, incoherent ideas that they were in danger from their father. How far the after event induced her to believe this it is impossible to say; but on the first day that she was able to sit up a woman whom she did not remember came into her bedroom, crying:

"Do you know what that villain has done? that villain Pilkington! he has sold your two youngest children for slaves to New York!"

Fortunately the doctor who attended her was a friend, and she took him into her confidence; he advised her to write "to the rulers and Bishops" in Ireland, which she did that very night. The letters were delivered in time to prevent the transaction, and "Mr. Pilkington was obliged to refund to the master of the Kid-Ship the golden earnest he had received as the price of the innocent."

Letitia however was left in suspense by not having her letters answered, so, learning that Worsdale was in Dublin, she wrote to him. His reply greatly cheered her, in spite of some bad news. The three children were well; he had paid an apprentice fee to a milliner for her daughter, and had taken the younger boy to himself, intending to take him to Paris. Her mother, old Mr. Pilkington and her last born infant were all dead.

It became more and more difficult for Letitia to gain a living, for in a few years the novelty had worn away for those who bought verses, and apart from Cibber, her friends were but a passing show. She changed her lodgings again and again; she went to a milliner's house in Fleet Street, to a landlady who attracted by an appearance of jollity, but who in habits proved a most revolting slut. "She told me herself she had not combed her head for three years . . . so that her hair, though naturally fine, being quite matted on a filthy hair-cap, seemed to be a composition of a raw silk and moss." Her morals were as cleanly as her hair,

and in disgust Letitia found a new lodging near by, kept by industrious, sober people. Having lived here a week she discovered that the address was Drury Lane, then notorious as the resort of loose women. So she went back to St. James's, taking cheaper apartments than before. For a time she was retained as Lord Galway's muse and secretary, "an employment both of honour and profit," until a Mr. Spencer, trying to force his company upon her, locked her door upon Lord Galway, and estranged him. Alderman Barber promised to get her taken as companion to the Duchess of Buckingham, but died before he could fulfil his promise.

One morning in 1742 there called upon Letitia "an ugly squinting old fellow," to quote her description, who, on assuring himself that she was Mrs. Pilkington, said he had come to tell her that a Mr. Clark, of Edmundsbury, had died leaving her £500; and he showed her a letter asking her to call on Counsellor Clark in Essex Street, Strand, who was to pay her the money. While in hope and doubt she was musing upon this, the man asked her to go to Richmond and live with him; and to overcome her refusal to do this urged that they might be mutually useful to each other.

"In what, sir?" Letitia asked; and he explained that he had received the manuscript of the life of Alderman Barber from her husband, and had learned that she possessed letters of Dean Swift's, also a true character of the Alderman written by her husband, all of which would enrich the volume, and for which he would give her a handsome consideration. Greatly surprised, she asked his name and found he was Edmund Curll. At that, in spite of her disappointment, she burst out laughing, dropped a curtsey, and said, "Farewell, legacy." For she knew all about Edmund Curll, and appreciated the fine scheme he had laid to trick her out of any valuables she may have owned.

She was careful, however, to call upon Counsellor Clark,

and found that the defunct gentleman had scores of relatives, but had died intestate. She adds that she herself was charged with writing the Alderman's "Life" but had never even seen it. It was published as written by Edmund Curll.

She moved again to cheaper lodgings kept by a Mrs. Trifoli, who lived upon her lodgers in a double sense, sharing their food on every opportunity. "If one sent for a pint of beer she would intercept it and drink half . . . but indeed she was very civil, for she always sent them word she drank their healths, and so she did in reality, yea, their very vital blood."

Letitia had now to face actual want. "I called every morning for the tea kettle, though I had no tea—then I said I was engaged to dine abroad, and took a solitary walk to Westminster Abbey—and ranged the solemn aisles alone, envying those who rested in peace from their labours; till at last, having been three days and three nights without food of any kind, Heaven pardon me! a melancholy thought came into my head, that it was better to die at once than to die daily; and that, as I could not fardels bear, it was best to make my own *quietus,* and no longer strive to keep up a frail and feverish being."

From the Abbey on that third day she wandered into St. James's Park, and seated herself by Rosamond's Pond, contemplating the water with mixed feelings. Two ladies, however, came to rest on the seat by her and fell into conversation. In the end they insisted upon her supping with them in their house, which had an entrance in the park. There she found a very handsome man in a gold brocade nightgown, the husband of the young lady (but once only the footman), who was obviously angry at her appearance; which brought back to her mind the fear and terror she used to feel when her father, mother or other friend went to see her in her home at Dublin, being assured they would not leave without some gross affront offered them by her husband.

The next evening she went again to the park and made

LETITIA PILKINGTON
From a mezzotint by Richard Purcell, after a painting by Nathaniel Hone

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several attempts to throw herself in the water, but at each the fear of something after death "puzzled her will." She went back to the seat lost to everything but the struggle between her wish to die and the natural demand for self-preservation. She was disturbed by a touch on her shoulder and a voice saying:

"Lord! can this be Mrs. Pilkington!"

She looked up, dazed and silent.

"May I presume, madame, to ask on what intention you are sitting here?"

She begged the stranger to leave her in peace, which he refused, and insisted on her going with him out of the park. He proved to be a Captain Hamilton who had seen her years earlier at her uncle's house at Cork. They supped together on cold chicken, ham and champagne, after which she confided her story to him, drawing tears into his eyes. He escorted her to her lodgings, when he put two guineas into her hand, promising to see her the next morning; but she never saw him again.

Letitia gives no dates, and little indication of how time passed, but the outstanding event which quickly followed upon the attempt at suicide happened in October, 1742, when she was thirty. She had got into arrears with her landlady, and early one morning two men, the sight of whom struck terror into her soul, came into her bedroom, ordering her as "an Irish Papist bitch" to come with them. They were indeed rough times! as most books on the period testify. She was taken to the Marshalsea to endure all its privations and coarse company for nine weeks. She wrote to beg help from Dr. Meade and another, and received two guineas in all. Colley Cibber was in Bath, and when he heard what has happened he sent her forty-two sixpences, fearing her pocket might be picked of a guinea. When he was in town again he used all his influence on her behalf, and Letitia declares that he induced "no less than sixteen Dukes to contribute a guinea apiece" towards her salvation. Sixteen Dukes!

Having paid all that was due, she left the prison with sixteen shillings in her pocket. It was Christmas Eve and she was homeless. She went to her last lodging to collect her papers—her stock-in-trade, which led to her sleeping there that night, and in the morning the sixteen shillings had vanished. She had no choice but to go to Cibber, and to her joy he told her he had interested the Duke of Richmond for her, who had left five guineas for her use.

On New Year's Day a poem by her "To Colley Cibber, Esq.," was published in the *Gazette,* the first lines of which ran:

"Lost in a prison's joyless gloom,
Cheerless and dreary as the tomb,
Where on the bed of care I lay,
And wept the lonely hours away:
When every hope and wish was fled
But to be numbered with the dead,
You like the messenger of grace,
Spoke my despairing soul to peace;
Wiped off the tear from sorrow's eye,
Bid bars and bolts, strong warded, fly.

. . . . . .

May He whose wisdom guides the spheres
Proportion blessings to thy years;
To thee may rosy bosomed spring
Pleasure and health and plenty bring,
Till time, with gentle steps, convey
Thy soul to realms of endless day."

VII

The next four or five years were the saddest and hardest of Letitia's existence. She struggled gallantly, and that she did come through them showed the spirit that was in her. Dr. Delany, who received a pathetic letter from her in the summer of 1743, gave her an introduction to Samuel Richardson. She thinking a printer could be of little im-

portance took no trouble over her dress except to make herself clean and neat; and was quite astonished when, on arriving at Salisbury Square, she found a house of a very grand appearance. Mr. Richardson kept her to breakfast and dinner with his family, then calling her into the study gave her twelve guineas from Dr. Delany. She counted the money over and found she had fourteen pieces, and offered the two back, but Richardson kindly said that they were but a trifle he had ventured to add.

At her wit's end to know what to do, she decided to open a pamphlet shop, and wrote to Richardson in June about "a most compleat beautiful shop in the Strand, opposite Buckingham Street"; but eventually she took one in St. James's Street where she could be in the centre of her "noble benefactors." She laid her money out in goods and put a notice in her window:

LETTERS WRITTEN HERE ON ANY SUBJECT EXCEPT THE LAW. PRICE TWELVE PENCE. PETITIONS ALSO DRAWN AT THE SAME RATE: MEM: READY MONEY: NO TRUST.

The first day a parson entered and asked if she had anything new. "Yes, sir, my present situation." "I am sure of that," he answered, looking earnestly at her, and then told her that they had lived next door to each other when they were young. One day a man wearing a greasy leather apron came in, and, after him, a postman with a letter for which he wanted payment. She had no money, and seeing this the "leather apron" drew from his pocket a handful of gold and gave her a guinea. He wanted a love-letter written for him, but would not take the change. Then seeing distress in her face after she had opened her letter, he sent for a bottle of champagne to revive her.

Once two young sparks from Ireland came in, one named Meade from Cork. As a "friend and relation" he asked for a dish of tea, and while it was being prepared, the second youth began to be personal. It seems that these two young

cubs thought her a wicked woman, and that it was their duty to tell her so. "There was nothing gross, indecent, abusive or unmannerly which this wretch did not say to me," says Letitia, till she was provoked to retaliate by going into the past history of his family which she had known in Ireland, and so reduced him to silence.

While keeping this shop, a period of not many months, Letitia started to make "stampt paper hats," an idea which seemed to have little success in it; besides the stamps were borrowed and had to be returned. One day a very richly dressed gentleman entered saying he had a letter for her. She received it very respectfully and laughed when she found inside the love-letter she had written for the man who had before masqueraded in a leather apron. He gave her an invitation to his country seat and forced two guineas upon her "for theatre tickets."

Then one Sunday evening, when the shop was closed, thieves broke in and cleared off all her clothes, a robbery that quite ruined her, as she had to buy others instead of paying her rent, in consequence of which the landlord seized the rest of her possessions!

VIII

It was while she was running this shop that Letitia came into touch with her younger son John. She had learned that he had been apprenticed at the age of nine to Dr. Arne, the composer in Dublin, who lived there for two years from the end of 1742. On hearing that he was again in London she went to see him. He told her that John had left him, that he had pawned some music books belonging to him, and he (Arne) had complained to Mr. Pilkington, who asked him to put a price upon the books. When Matthew heard the price he was delighted, saying that he was glad to hear that the theft was large enough to merit the death penalty, and entreated him to prosecute the boy, declaring that nothing would give him greater satisfaction than to see the dog hanged.

This shocked Arne so much that he severely corrected the culprit himself, who, not unnaturally, ran away. He had since had a letter from him from Scotland. Letitia wrote to the boy that night urging him to come to her in London.

She received an answer to her letter, written in Edinburgh, and dated September 16, 1744. This letter gives a shocking picture, not only of Matthew, but of the inhuman treatment which could be given to children at that time. It begins with expressing John's joy at hearing from her, having been so positively assured that she was dead. He had kissed her letter a thousand times. "You desire me to give you a particular account of whatever has befallen me since I had the misfortune of losing you, my dearest and only friend, for I with all duty and gratitude remember your fond affection for me."

He records how he was taken from school because one day a boy threw a stone at him and he, returning it, broke a pane of glass, and his father was charged a groat to replace it.

"Upon this I received a most inhuman correction from him, which was repeated every morning and night for six days together. He stripped off my clothes, though in the depth of winter, and locked them up, leaving me without any covering but my shirt in the dark back-kitchen, which, as you may remember, was in the winter overflowed with water, charging the servants not to give me a morsel of food; and that I am alive is due to God's providence, who, I hope, preserved me to be a comfort to you.

"However, the servants, though they had but a groat a day allowed them to live upon, used to give me a share of their bread and butter-milk; and, when my father went abroad, would permit me to warm my body at the kitchen fire; nay, and as my father said it was too much indulgence for me to sleep with his footman, the poor fellow used to let me lie down in the day, where I spent most of my time, and was neither allowed pen, ink or book to amuse me."

He then relates in detail what happened at Mr. Arne's house. Mrs. Arne drank too much gin and would persuade her husband to think well or ill of him as she was drunk or sober. She went to examine the attic one day and came down saying some music books had vanished from a box there. The husband said none were gone, upon which she struck him in the face, swearing that if he did not thrash the boy as a thief she would. John was frightened and flew from the house, but returned later only to find he was accused of stealing many more things. A lodger in the house called for his horsewhip, and he and the Arnes "were beating me for three hours to make me confess what I had done with the books, swearing they would cut me to death if I did not own. I was forced one time to say that I sold them; another, that I gave them away, to get a little respite; so, when they had made me confess to what they pleased, I was put to bed and locked in, in order to be sent to Newgate next day."

That evening when the Arnes and their friends were rehearsing *Comus,* John managed to shoot the lock of his door back and crept down the stairs and away. It must have been at this juncture that he walked from Dublin to Cork to his uncle there, to escape the pains and penalties of life in Dublin.

John had been taken to Edinburgh as a sort of companion—probably a serving-boy—to a rich youth, and it was not until February, 1746, eighteen months later, that he sought out his mother.

Poor Letitia! this boy was her dearest child, and the knowledge of what he had endured broke her heart. She fell into what she calls an hysteric colic. On recovering somewhat she went once more to Westminster Abbey to soothe her soul, and stayed so long that she was locked in. She called aloud till the sound of her own voice frightened her. It grew dark and she thought she would sit in a pew till the morning, but remembered that the church was full of rats. Then she took from the Communion table a carpet

which covered it, and dragged it and a velvet cushion into the pulpit and there made her bed. She slept and dreamed a long and vivid dream in which the great dead buried in the Abbey passed in procession before her.

With the morning came the sexton and when he heard her story he fetched some cherry brandy to revive her, and she went home to wash off the dirt with which the carpet had covered her from head to foot.

In his own memoirs John Carteret Pilkington pays a tribute to his mother. He says that until the separation of his father and mother he had been brought up with the utmost delicacy and tenderness; "my poor mother having made it her chief study to mingle instruction with delight, and by the most engaging methods to mould our tender minds for fine impressions, insomuch that we loved her as a companion and respected her as a parent. . . . For some time after she left the kingdom my father continued moderately kind to us, and might probably have still been so, but that going on a visit into the country he met with Miss Sands. This lady, without sense, beauty, fortune, or one amiable quality, found means so powerfully to engage his affections, that he entirely neglected everything but the pursuit of her, nay, so much enamoured was he with her very name, that it was carved on every tree in his garden, and written with a diamond on every window in his house; and very seldom had we a sight of him."

John continues that Ann Sands was a direct contrast to his mother. "If my mother was witty and polite, she was hoggish and stupid; if my mother was neat and cleanly, the other was dirty and sluttish; if my mother was liberal and generous, she was mean and mercenary."

John also says of his father, "if anything disturbed his temper abroad, I was sure of a flogging when he came home, and a rainy day was fatal to me, being the forerunner of chastisement whether with or without a cause." Matthew declared that John was not his son, and naturally Letitia said he was. It was somewhere about this time that

a servant engaged at the house next to where she was then staying asked to see her, and told Letitia she had been maid to Mr. Pilkington who lived on Lazar Hill, and had turned his wife out of doors. "And what were the names of the children?" asked Letitia. "Why, there was Master Billy, Miss Betty, and Master Jack."

"How came you to leave him?"

"Why, indeed, he was beating Miss and Master sadly and I asked him why he did it. He said because they were none of his. 'Oh, sir,' said I, 'sure Master Jack is yours, for he is your own picture.' 'Ay,' said he, 'the mother was thinking of me when he was got.' 'In truth,' said I, 'I don't doubt that, for I believe you were the nearest person to her.'" For which she was at once dismissed.

When the shop was closed for ever Letitia found a furnished lodging, "just tolerable," and there tragedy touched her. She glosses it over in her *Memoirs* saying that her daughter came to see her, and the surprise made her faint away, "but joy is overcoming as grief."

Poor, unhappy, gallant little woman, she shouldered the heavy burden then laid upon her, and hid from the world that it had ever existed. In her letters to Richardson we learn the truth.

In December, 1745, she wrote to him:

"Sir, I have been long silent. I only wish I were so for ever. But indeed, I think all sorts of plagues and shames are to be raised on my bare head. My daughter is come to me big with child, naked and desolate; and because I would not let her lie in the street, my saint-like Methodist landlady has padlocked the door and turned us both there. My own writings she has secured, as well as a few small matters, she, my child, had provided for her child. I have less authority to blame her than perhaps another mother would take. We have both been forced to sit up in a place they call a night-house, all last night, so that my head is extremely disordered; and I hope you will pardon my bad writing. As I know you are a subscriber to some of the

hospitals, could I but get her to lye-in in one, I should think myself happy."

Just before Christmas she is begging for a little old linen, saying "I know not what to do with her or myself, in this dreadful exigence. I can procure no lodging for either of us, but the floor; and to have her bring forth her child, and not have anything to wrap it in, the malicious world might perhaps judge we had an intention to destroy it."

On the 28th she writes to thank Richardson and his lady for their bounty, saying that parish officers have been demanding security that she shall not be troublesome to them in case of the mortality, either of her daughter or the child; and as that was out of her power they threatened to pass the girl from parish to parish, back to Dublin.

A month later she writes that Mr. Pelham had sent her five guineas and Mr. Furneze one guinea, and she and her daughter had got into a decent garret, and by the goodness of the Richardsons were tolerably provided against the approaching event. Colley Cibber had been at work as she gratefully acknowledged.

At the beginning of March, 1746, Dr. Delany sent her five guineas, and by that date her "long-lost son" had turned up. He carried a note from her to Richardson, in which she announced that a grandson had been born. Richardson notes to this letter (about John): "Ragged, destitute. I gave him a suit of clothes. He gave particular orders to the tailor to make it fashionable to the height of the mode."

Letitia's burdens lessened when in April the father of the babe had it put out to nurse, her daughter went to serve a lady and John went with Captain Meade in a man-of-war. But through the winter of 1746-7 she was in the direst want, lodging at the sign of the Dove in Seven Dials, at the Blue Peruke in the Strand and at other such places, probably giving service for her keep. In August, 1745, she had made a "last request" to Richardson, for the gift of a few sheets of gilt paper, a few pens and a stick of sealing wax, that

she might write letters to the nobility begging for as much money as would carry her back to Ireland, but she was still in London eighteen months later.

Then early one morning she saw Worsdale standing at the door of an eating house. He seemed overjoyed to see her and invited her to breakfast with him. He had work he wanted done and proposed that she should have free lodgings at his house in Mount Street and a shilling a day, for which she was to work for him as a "ghost." She readily accepted "as well for the fine air as being rent-free." But she found that she had to work very hard, as Worsdale sometimes gave her as many as fifteen subjects at once, and insisted upon her enduring an absolutely solitary life. Among other work for him, she wrote three ballad operas, of which she kept no copy, for, she says, Worsdale snatched the work from her, sheet by sheet, as fast as she wrote it. As he sold as his own all that she did for him it was a good bargain—for him!

"Never," she says, "did any soul lead a more solitary life than poor Letitia, for Worsdale had positively ordered the old woman (his charwoman) not to let any human creature come near me; and she punctually obeyed him, more out of malice than integrity."

Later, for some reason, Worsdale took furnished rooms near the Exchange and gave Letitia a small room off his painting room. She describes the etiquette of their dining table with evident malice and yet with an evident sense of fun. She says she was kept a prisoner in her own room, fasting and writing till 3 o'clock; and then was called to a dinner of beefsteaks or mutton chops, cooked by Worsdale.

"We had four play-bills laid for a table-cloth; knives, forks, or plates had we none; no matter, for that—

> "I had a blade
> With which my tuneful pens were made—
> And so, to make my dinner sure,
> I for a fork employed a skewer.

"The butter, when we had any, was deposited in the cool and fragrant recess of an old shoe; a coffee-pot of mine served for so many uses as ever scrub had, for sometimes it boiled coffee, sometimes tea, it brought small beer, strong beer, and I am more than half afraid it has been applied to less noble uses; but be that as it may, I've done the man some service, and he knows it."

One morning when Letitia was alone a beautiful young lady about sixteen and her brother came to her asking if they might see Mr. Worsdale's portrait of the "Highlander." When it was brought to her the girl kissed the face, hands, feet and every bit of it, and repeated the lines

> "In every lineament of which we trace,
> The injured saint and Royal Martyr's face."

Worsdale being told of this, went to call upon the two young people, and hearing Letitia praised by them, declared there was no one in his rooms but a charwoman, and went back to her in a passion, declaring she should not stay in his house to show her wit and breeding. She retorted that he always boasted of being Sir Godfrey Kneller's bastard, and some people were so fond of family they did not mind proving themselves sons of whores. A little later he caught her writing a letter for some young woman, and he called her into an inner room to abuse and storm at her. The waiting girl was much troubled and managed to slip a guinea into Letitia's hand, whispering to her to come and see her in Golden Square.

At this point in her record Letitia discourses upon various matters, upon beggars, poverty, munificence, Dean Swift and Doctor Delany; and it is not until fifteen pages have been turned that she takes up the thread again by begging the reader's forgiveness for so often mentioning a person so contemptible, so unworthy even of satire, as one Worsdale, a painter; but that he is so ineradically mixed up with her life that she cannot ignore him.

Then Worsdale went abroad, and Letitia made her escape from slavery, going straight to see Mr. Cibber, whose "kindness to her was inviolable." After the visit she wrote a poem to him, and in a day or two he responded with, "Well, madam, here are two guineas for your flattery, and one more for the liberty I took (of altering some lines); Mr. Stanhope altered a line, for which he desires you will accept a guinea, and Mr. Hervey pays you the same compliment for changing one monosyllable for another." Letitia heartily wished that every man at White's had taken the same liberty. During those years in London Letitia had often tried to raise money by writing laudatory poems to people of note, and taking them personally to their houses, hoping for an interview, and a return compliment—in gold. Sometimes money was actually lost in these ventures, and in any case the gain was not as great as it sounded. She gives some details of the importunacy of servants in these transactions. If one needs anything from a great man, she says, the expenses are as follows: pen, ink and paper, 1½d.; someone to find if his lordship is at home, 1/-; hall porter, 10/6; valet, £1 1/-; footman with the answer, 5/-; total, £1 17s. 7½d.—a high percentage to pay for a gift of five guineas!

IX

John returned from the high seas sick with fever, and on recovering got a post at colouring prints, "which he did beautifully!" By this time Letitia had made up her mind that London was exhausted for her, and that she must get back to Dublin. So she went to Dr. Delany, then in London, who granted her suit "in the most compassionate and obliging manner." Then she pertinaciously attacked another Irish divine, and so raised enough money to take her and John to Dublin.

There was one titled lady to whom she applied for

assistance, who wondered at her impudence in addressing her: and Letitia comments upon this in her third volume.

"Ladies, let me entreat you will drop that nasty paw word 'impudent.' . . . A woman who has suffered in reputation knows not what to do; 'tis all impudence, though her betters have more; for that in the Captain is but a choleric word, in the soldier is flat blasphemy. Upon my word, if, instead of the impudence I am charged with, you would call me a desolate, afflicted wretch, you would speak the truth, for poor Letitia is become the football of fortune."

She and her son set out from London "in the waggon, a most tiresome way of travelling," but cheap. They started on May Day, when the horses were adorned with ribbons and flowers, and at every inn they came to a new ribbon was added. This gave an air of festivity to the journey, which in reality was comfortless enough. To be called to breakfast at three in the morning, upon salt beef and cabbage—no tea, no coffee—was in itself a trial; certainly Letitia found it impossible at that hour, and weariness with the jolting ride spoiled the appetite at night.

There were intervals when the horses rested, and Letitia and John wandered a little into the country. "My son and I found out a sweet place, canopied with woodbine, which had enringed itself in plats about a large apple tree, whose blossoms shed perfumes, while the whole season warbled round our heads: we seated ourselves under the wide spreading shade, listening with delight to those wild musicians. Suddenly the boy cried out: 'Oh, mamma, what shall I do?' 'What is the matter, child?' 'Look at my leg!' I did so, and beheld a snake twisted up it; I, though heartily startled, had presence of mind sufficient to beg he would not strike it; he took my advice, though indeed both he and I were ready to faint—and the evil worm crawled away without doing him any prejudice." She adds, "I

was never after tempted to sit down in Albion's fruitful fields."

On another day they went out to enjoy the morning on a common, and the first thing they saw was a corpse hanging in chains from a gibbet. In a dry ditch near fifteen or twenty of the dead man's relations sat watching the dead and bewailing their loss. She and her son were both frightened by the wild-looking people, one of whom accosted them, saying his cousin Paddy had been hung there for nothing; the nothing being that Paddy had murdered a proud hussy who would have nothing to do with him. With fair words Letitia evaded his attentions, feeling infinitely more frightened of him than she had been of the snake.

After various small vicissitudes, including an exhausted purse and a successful application to a lady on board, they landed in Ireland, literally walking from the vessel, which had got stranded. Having secured a lodging outside Dublin, Letitia wrote to Matthew for payment of the £65 for which she held his bond. Eventually £20 was wrung from the unwilling parson. From that time she settled to the task of writing the first book of her Memoirs, about forty pages of which had been done in England. She applied to everyone of any wealth or importance, and to her friends and enemies, especially the latter, to subscribe to it; so much so that she was the talk of Dublin, and the theatrical manager introduced in his play a humorous description of Letitia crying: "Subscribe, or else I'll paint you like the Devil!"

She says she enjoyed the jest and sent him a crown for a box ticket which he accepted, and, in return, got a friend to add six couplets of scurrility to his former encomium of her.

Among those whom she asked to subscribe was Mrs. Warren; for as she considered that this lady was the chief cause of the separation between Matthew and herself she thought she had a right to expect a subscription, and she made her request—she says in very civil terms. She re-

ceived a reply which she copied into her book and which she assures the public is genuine. It runs:

"Whoosomdever yow aree, I aboar yow and your filthy idyous; I submit my cows to the devil, and fear nout hiss enemoys, whileoust I am undder his preteckshon. As to the Parson yow metown, tis wile nowne what hee iss; he ruinged my sun by his ungraitfullnesse. It is not in your power to defamatonous my corector in your wild memboirs. So I am, wythh harti prawours for your speedi deformation, Yours"

What can be said of this astonishing and unbelievable letter? However, someone wrote it a long while ago, and it really does not read like Letitia's handiwork.

The publication of the first volume caused great public interest in England as well as in Ireland, for the intimate pictures it gave of Swift: and in Dublin for the added reason that Matthew seems to have lost his head over it, as well he might. Our knowledge of Matthew as a citizen is almost nil, but he seems to have had no friend to stand by him, Archbishop Hoadly being the only person mentioned as being a lasting friend to him. In his helplessness Matthew conceived the plan of writing broadsides under various pseudonyms, denouncing the memoirs and giving advice to the public generally—and castigation to Letitia. In one effusion he declared that "those who have been liberal to this profligate wretch, I think may be justly numbered with those who have given the children's bread to the dogs."

At the idea of a second volume his hysteria increased: "Will the public countenance and encourage one (had the law its due force), should certainly be made a public example at the tail of a cart?" He appeals to his own sex: "Would you but show yourselves men, by exercising those qualities which give a true dignity to human nature by showing a manly indignation and abhorrence of vice?"

There was *The Parson's reply to Mrs. Pilkington's Letter,* in which he drops into verse:

" A passage may be found, I've heard,
In some old Greek and Latin bard,
Which says, would crows in silence eat,
Their offals or their better meat,
Their generous feeders not provoking
By loud and inharmonious croaking,
They might, unhurt by envy's claws,
Live on, and stuff to boot their maws."

Letitia copied his method by publishing broadsides in reply and at the end of one of these she says, " I do what you did not dare to do. Subscribe to this my name. L. Pilkington. P.S. My second volume is in the press, where your treatment of our children makes a very considerable figure."

Matthew replied under the name of " The Draper " complaining about petty scribblers who murder paper, " the very press groans at their impertinence "; " the supposed author of the memoirs " " who from the dug imbibed base principles—who through an insatiable itch for writing hath exceeded the bounds of reason, discretion and truth." " Dare you plead for justice who have practised villainy from the cradle? "

In the first volume of the *Memoirs* Letitia described two visits of a young fop, Mr. H——d, who confessed to her that he was invited by Matthew to their house for a specific reason. A broadside purporting to be written by Will Hammond was issued, in which a passage runs: " I here in most solemn manner declare upon my honour and veracity that you (Matthew) never did directly or indirectly give me any commission to act as she reports," and he swears as solemnly that he never told her he had such a commission.

Letitia is sure that this was written by her husband and answers it in another broadside with her name across the top, the end sentence of which runs (she being ostensibly answering Will Hammond), " You told me my father had

injured you, in acquainting a young lady you were a married man. Your wife told me in London that you lived on her prostitution."

It is impossible to comment on this, for the statement points so many ways.

All this public controversy meant a great success for the book. Letitia once said, "Dublin is a place of the least sin and the most scandal of any city in the world"; and certainly Dublin enjoyed the Pilkington scandal.

Colley Cibber remained her friend to the end. When he knew that she was in Dublin, he wrote to her a kindly letter of advice and appreciation. He had known her long, and evidently saw no reason for condemning her out of hand. His letter began:

"Thou frolicsome Farce of Fortune!

"What! is there another act to come of you, then? I was afraid some time ago you had made your last exit. Well, but without wit or compliment, I am glad to hear you are so tolerably alive. . . . You say I have been for many years the kind preserver of your life. In this, I think, I have no great merit, because you seemed to set so little value upon it yourself, otherwise you would have considered that poverty was the most helpless handmaid that ever waited upon a high-spirited lady: but as long as the world allowed you wit and parts, how poor, compared to you without a shilling in your pocket, was an illiterate Queen of the Indies. . . . If the value I have for you gives you any credit in your own country, pray stretch it as far as you think it can be serviceable to you; for under all the rubbish of your misfortunes I see your merits sparkle like a lost jewel. I have no greater pleasure than in placing my esteem on those who can feel and value it. Had you been born to a large fortune, your shining qualities might have put half the wit of your sex out of countenance."

When Letitia was looking for a patron to her first volume she was introduced to Lord Kingsborough, then Sir Robert King, a young man who wanted something to lift him out

of boredom, and who liked the importance of having a book dedicated to him. It is certain that Letitia had made it her business to know what sort of man he was before she chose him, and she was justified in her foresight. He accepted the honour with pleasure, and sent her two ten-pound notes as a subscription. On another occasion he sent her notes for thirty pounds, lamenting that he could not find another for twenty, adding though that with pleasure he delayed it that he might take another opportunity of paying his respects.

In a letter to him Letitia at this time declared that she had had so much money lately that she had been at a loss to know what to do with it. She wrote to him effusively: "But oh, my loved, honoured and excellent Lord Kingsborough! where shall I find words adequate to the sense I have of your goodness, your unlimited generosity! thou kind preserver of mine and my son's life!" "And now, my lord, and oh! since you permit me to call you by that tender name, my friend, and let me add my guardian angel."

Her health was failing, and she hoped always that Lord Kingsborough would after her death find occupation for John, and it might have been, but that a story reached his lordship's ears which altered their relations. Someone persuaded him to believe that Letitia had spoken disrespectfully of him and that John had boasted that he could sell copies of his letters at a half-penny a-piece. Whatever was true or false, the nobleman believed the tale, called upon her and demanded the return of his letters. She gave him some and the next morning he sent a man for the remainder, who swore and stormed at being kept waiting. She lost her temper and, piqued, "wrote a little warmly on the subject to my lord." It was the end and Letitia fell a prey to the greatest languor and heaviness of soul.

When she was planning her third volume she comments: "Many indeed are glad to become purchasers of it.

Persons whom I know nothing of come and beg I may not put them in the third volume and they will subscribe. . . . My dear ladies, why are you so frightened? Have you all then a sore place which you are afraid I should touch? "

In one of her letters to Kingsborough Letitia tells how she met the great Mr. Wesley, "a formal, stiff fellow in black, with his own lank hair," at her printer's, but could not get a sentence out of him. Then he offered to call on her and went to breakfast. In appearance he was extraordinarily changed, the muscles of his face braced up to their proper functions, and he really looked a sprightly young fellow. He explained that his seeming sadness and solemnity were of the utmost use in his vocation, and it was natural that he should obtain as many followers as possible. He was really quite chatty and pleasant; she promised to honour his confidence and he subscribed ten guineas to her book.

John Wesley himself gives a very different account of this meeting. He says: "I breakfasted with one of the society and found she had a lodger I little thought of. It was the famous Mrs. Pilkington, who soon made an excuse for following me upstairs. I talked with her seriously for about an hour. We then sang **Happy Magdalene*. She appeared to be extremely struck; how long the impression may last, God knows." Well, not very long. Letitia was at heart a religious woman, implicitly believing in the tenets of her day, but her sense of humour would have soon asserted itself in contemplating the scene afterwards, and evidently resulted in a perverted presentation of the event.

In her last book she apostrophises her husband often. Very little is known of Matthew after the divorce; except that he continued to live in the little house on Lazar Hill till his death. Archbishop Hoadly always befriended him; and gave him early in his career the rectorship of Portrane, about ten miles from Dublin, a most deserted place, yet it

* Hymn written by Charles Wesley.

must have had fascination, for Swift's Stella often went there. In the early forties the Archbishop further made him Vicar of Donabate, and though he probably drew only small stipends, his income was just as probably sufficient for his needs. Letitia jibes at him for making quill pens, saying, "Writing one good sermon or useful book, both of which when I knew you, you were as capable of as most young men, would have tended more to your reputation than any merely mechanical art." She also declared that by writing of him she had made him known, and he must remain her debtor, for it is well known that deceived husbands go to heaven. "Were he one he ought to thank me, who helped to send him thither. If I have bestowed on him fame in this world and salvation in the next, what could a reasonable man desire more from his wife? but some folks are never satisfied."

It is said that towards the end of her life Letitia drank too much; she probably did, but there is no evidence of it available, nor is there any evidence as to what may have been the illness which caused her death.

Towards the end of her writing she says: "To avouch my innocence in a point where appearances were strong against me, would perhaps little avail me. The Supreme Judge of Hearts alone will, at the last great Day, clear or condemn me: to Whose unerring justice and boundless goodness I submit my cause." At another point she writes: "Had I strayed from the paths of virtue when turned out desolate to the wide world, forsaken by all my once dear seeming friends and relatives, I might at least have hoped for pity, and given necessity as a plea for error. This has made me so circumstantial in every particular of my nine years living in London."

After recording the break with Lord Kingsborough Letitia adds: "And here, gentle reader, my story and my life draw to a period. I am convinced, from the present situation of my health, that I shall never live to see this volume published. It is the only legacy I have to leave

my poor boy who, I fear will meet with many enemies on account of my writings." This third volume was not published until 1754, four years after her death, for John found it very difficult to pay for the publication.

According to John her illness was caused by an "extreme bad stomach and digestion," she was ill for some time, and John sat up with her at night when necessary. She wished she could have seen "dear Dr. Delany," but as he was away she sent for the curate of the parish, who at the end of his visit, asked her if she forgave her husband. She at once became animated and said that once when the Priest was going to give a dying man absolution, he asked him if he forgave his enemies. The man replied, "Arrah, faith, Father, I do forgive everyone, only Teddy Brenen, that pounded my cow." "Nay, but," said the priest, "you must forgive him also, or I cannot absolve you!"

"Well, Father, if I die, I will forgive him; but if I live, I never can. Will that do?"

"Arrah, faith," said the Priest, "if it won't do, it must do."

"So, sir," said Letitia, "if I die, I do forgive him, and I wish the God whom he has offended may do the same; but if I live, mark you that, Mr. Parson, I never will."

She made John promise on his life, on his honour, on his soul that she should not be buried in Matthew Pilkington's family burial place, but with her father. She died August 29, 1750, and was buried as she wished near Dr. Van Lewen in St. Anne's Church, Dawson Street.

On or before the 4th of September Matthew married Miss Nancy Sandes, of Kilcavan in Queen's County. In February, 1754, Matthew signed a will which has proved a valuable clue to his identity; and further an incontestable proof of a warped soul. He was a priest in Holy Orders, preaching love on earth and in heaven and he expressed in a legal document hatred of his own children.

After leaving all he possessed to his wife Ann he declared: "To my son, William Pilkington, who never felt a filial affection for me (to the utmost of my observation) I give the sum of five pounds sterling, and to those two abandoned wretches John Carteret Pilkington and Elizabeth Pilkington I give the sum of one shilling if demanded within twelve months, and I should abhor to mention them in any deed of mine, if it were not to prevent all possibility of dispute or litigation."

The first part of this document runs "In the name of Almighty God who alone is the disposer of all earthly affairs and events, etc." What a terrible God was that one worshipped by Matthew Pilkington!

Various dates have been given for his death. The *D.N.B.* says that nothing is known of his later life, excepting that "he fell into evil habits and obscurity from which he only emerged to write a few tirades against his wife:" and no date of his death is added.

But there were either one or two or three Matthew Pilkingtons. The *D.N.B.* gives three; but the discovery by Mr. F. Elrington Ball of Matthew's will, shows that certainly there were not three, for it proves that the learned Matthew Pilkington who wrote *The Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters,* which was published in London, 1770, was Letitia's husband. Allibone declares that he was Prebend of Lichfield for one year 1747-48; but here it is possible that he was confused with a Rev. Matthew Pilkington of Derbyshire, who was educated at Cambridge. The *Sermon on the Election of the Lord Mayor,* published in 1733, was certainly the Irishman's work, while the *Rational Concordance, or an Index to the Bible,* published in Nottingham in 1749 was probably the work of the Englishman.

The date of Matthew's death has been obscured by the same confusion, the *D.N.B.* gives no date to him, but to the other two Matthews, are given 1784 and 1765. Mr. Ball states that the actual Matthew died on the 18th July,

1774, and his will was proved on the 28th of July, 1774; and those we may take as the correct dates.

As for John, he had a turn for writing, but he did not write as well as his mother. He finished her third volume, adding twenty printed pages, telling of the closing events of her life. When he was at last forced to live by his own exertions he adopted the same methods of attempting to earn a living as his mother had done, but with little success. He wrote a *Life* of himself which included letters of his mother's and poems of his father's: and also issued *The Real Story of John Carteret Pilkington*. He married, I imagine soon after his mother's death, as he was already then engaged. There seems to be no further account of him, excepting that in 1759 no less than three applications were made to the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle by his wife Dorinda Pilkington. One was addressed from Duke St., Grosvenor Square; the beginning of another ran:

"To His Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

"As the Duchess of Newcastle done Mrs. Pilkington the honour to subscribe to her husband's writings, am letting Her Grace know how it was at present," etc. etc.

The same old game that Letitia played, but without her ability or sparkle. John died in 1763, when he was about thirty-one. Had his father been a less inhuman parent everything might have been so different.

From Mr. Richard Ashe King's *Oliver Goldsmith* we learn a little more of the short and tragic life of Letitia's son: Jack Pilkington called one day upon Goldsmith in wild spirits, saying his fortune was made if only he could raise two guineas. A certain Duchess had a mania for white mice, of which she had two and would give any sum for others. He had commissioned a friend to bring some from India, and they were now arrived, actually in the river! in the docks! But he must buy a cage suitable for taking them to the duchess, and it would cost two guineas.

He produced a letter from his friend in India telling of the despatch of the mice. " My dear Jack, you are out of luck, I have but half a guinea in the world." " But your watch, dear doctor, I could pawn it. I am ashamed to ask such a thing, I shouldn't dare to ask it of anyone else, but I am absolutely sure to return the money in two days." Goldsmith gave him the watch, but never saw or heard again of Jack, " till the poor starving wretch was on his deathbed, when Goldsmith sent him a guinea."

Beyond the poetry and the *Memoirs* Letitia wrote a burlesque, *The Turkish Court, or the London Prentice,* which was acted at Capel Court, Dublin in 1748, when her name was in the mouth of everyone. It was never printed. There was also the first act of a tragedy, *The Roman Father,* which she carried no further because she knew Sheridan would not permit it to be played " merely because it was mine." There were also two comedies written for Worsdale and never of course attributed to her. Some of her poems were included in *Poems by Eminent Ladies,* London, 1755: and John collected or edited *The Celebrated Mrs. Pilkington's Jests, or The Cabinet of Wit and Humour* in 1751, of which there were later editions in 1764 and 1765.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL LISTS

[Where possible the entries refer to the first separate editions of the works specified; and where dates follow in brackets, they are the years of subsequent issues. Entries completely in brackets are of works attributed to, but not known definitely to be by the writer under whose name they occur. Separate issues of entries marked with an * have not been traced, but were in all probability published.]

I

Aphra Behn

1. 1671. *The Forced Marriage; or, The Jealous Bridegroom,* a tragi-comedy.
2. "That Beauty I adored before," a song in *The Westminster Drollery.*
3. *The Amorous Prince; or, The Curious Husband,* a comedy.
4. 1672. [*Covent Garden Drollery,* edited by A.B., and conjecturally attributed to Aphra Behn, by Mr. G. Thorn Drury.]
5. 1673. *The Dutch Lover,* a comedy.
6. 1676. *Abdelazer; or, The Moor's Revenge,* a tragedy.
7. *The Town Fop; or, Sir Timothy Tawdrey,* a comedy. [1677, 1699.]
8. 1677. *The Rover; or, The Banished Cavalier,* a comedy. [1709, 1735, 1757.]
9. [*The Debauchee; or, The Credulous Cuckold.* This is credited to Aphra Behn in the B.M. catalogue, but is not included in any collection of her plays and is not mentioned as hers by Baker or Ward.]
10. [*The Counterfeit Bridegroom; or, The Defeated Widow.* Sometimes attributed to Aphra Behn but not given as hers in the usual authorities.]
11. 1678. *Sir Patient Fancy,* a comedy.
12. 1679. *The Feigned Courtesans; or, A Night's Intrigue,* a comedy.
13. 1680. "Œnones Epistle to Paris," paraphrase included in *Ovid's Heroical Epistles,* translated by various hands. [1683, 1701, 1712, 1725.]
14. 1681. *The Rover, Part II,* a comedy.
15. 1682. *The City Heiress; or, Sir Timothy Treatall,* a comedy.
16. *The Roundheads; or, The Good Old Cause,* a comedy.
17. *The False Count; or, A New Way to Play an Old Game,* a comedy.
18. Prologue and Epilogue to *Romulus and Hersilia.*
19. Epilogue to Randolph's *The Jealous Lovers.*
20. 1683. *The Young King.*
21. *Young Jemmy; or, The Princely Shepherd,* a song.
22. [*Love Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister,* attributed to Aphra Behn, but not included in her "Works." It was entered at Stationers Hall, Oct. 28, 1683.]
23. 1684. *The Adventures of the Black Lady,* a novel.

24. *Poems Upon Several Occasions, with A Voyage to the Island of Love.* [1697.]
25. Prologue to Fletcher's *Valentinian.*
26. 1685. *A Pindaric on the Death of Charles II.*
27. *A Miscellany,* poems by A.B. and other writers.
28. 1686. *La Montre; or, The Lover's Watch,* translated from the French.
29. *Æsop's Fables,* rendered into English verse. [1687, 1703.]
30. 1687. *The Lucky Chance; or, An Alderman's Bargain,* a comedy.
31. *The Emperor of the Moon,* a farce.
32. *To the Most Illustrious Christopher Duke of Albemarle,* verses on his departure for Jamaica.
33. *To Henry Higden, Esq., on his Translation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal,* verses prefixed to that work.
34. *The History of Oracles,* translated from the French. [1699, and see No. 57.]
35. 1688. *A Discovery of New Worlds,* translated from the French. [1700, 1718.]
36. *On the Death of E. Waller, Esq.,* verses contributed to a memorial volume.
37. *A Pindaric Poem to the Rev. Dr. Burnet, on the Honour he did me of Enquiring after me and my Muse.*
38. *A Congratulatory Poem to Her Most Sacred Majesty on the Universal Hopes of all Loyal Persons for a Prince of Wales.*
39. *A Congratulatory Poem to Their Majesties on the Happy Birth of a Prince.*
40. *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave, a True History.* [1759, 1777, 1800, 1886, 1890; dramatised, and translated into French and German.]
41. *Lycidus; or, The Lover in Fashion,* in prose and verse.
42. *Agnes de Castro; or, The Force of Generous Love,* a novel; translated from the French.
43. *The Fair Jilt; or, The History of Prince Tarquin and Miranda,* a novel. [1886.]
44. *The Unfortunate Bride; or, The Blind Lady a Beauty,* a novel.
45. *Two Congratulatory Poems to Their Majesties on the Hope and the Happy Birth of a Prince.* [1689, see also Nos. 38 and 39.]
46. 1689. *The Lucky Mistake, a New Novel.*
47. *A Congratulatory Poem to Her Sacred Majesty Queen Mary Upon Her Arrival in England.*
48. 1690. *The Widow Ranter,* a tragi-comedy.
49. 1693. *Of Trees,* a translation of Bk. vi of Abraham Cowley's *Of Plants.* [This is the earliest known edition, but the work was entered at Stationers Hall, April 5, 1688.]
50. 1696. *The Histories and Novels of the Late Ingenious Mrs. Behn . . . Together with the Life and Memoirs of Mrs. Behn, written by One of the Fair Sex.* [1698, 1705, 1718, 1735 8th edn.]
51. *The Younger Brother,* a comedy.
52. 1697. *Poems, Second Edition, Also the Lover in Fashion, to Which is Added a Miscellany of New Poems.*
53. **The Nun; or, The Fair Vow Breaker,* a history was entered at Stationers Hall, Feb. 3. [*The Nun; or, The Perjured Beauty,* 1886.]

54. 1698. *Poetical Remains,* edited by Charles Gildon.
55. 1702. *Plays,* in two vols. [1718.]
56. 1711. *Works,* in three vols. [1712.]
57. 1718. *The Theory and System of Several New Inhabited Worlds; The History of Oracles; The Unfortunate Bride, etc.* [See Nos. 34, 35, 44.]
58. 1724. *Plays,* in four vols.
59. 1755. *Poems,* included in *A Select Collection . . . of Love Letters, etc.,* edited by G. Gaylove.
60. *Poems* included in *Poems by Eminent Ladies, etc.,* edited by M. Barber.
61. 1771. *Novels,* included in a *Collection of Novels,* edited by Elizabeth Griffith.
62. 1871. *Plays, Histories and Novels,* in six vols.
63. 1886. *The Fair Jilt; or, The Amours of Prince Tarquin and Miranda.* [See No. 43.]
64. *The Nun; or, The Perjured Beauty.* [See No. 53.]
65. *Oroonoko.* [1890. See No. 40.]
66. 1905. *The Novels of Aphra Behn,* edited by E. A. Baker; comprising Oroonoko; The Fair Jilt; The Nun; Agnes de Castro; The Lover's Watch; The Case for the Watch; The Lady's Looking-Glass to Dress Herself By; The Lucky Mistake; The Court of the King of Bantam; and The Adventure of the Black Lady.
67. 1908. *Selected Poetry of Aphra Behn,* edited by J. R. Tutin.
68. 1915. *Complete Works of Aphra Behn,* in six vols., edited by Montague Summers.
69. 1927. *Aphra Behn, the Incomparable Astrea,* by V. Sackville-West.

II

Mary de la Riviere Manley

1. 1696. *Letters Written by Mrs. Manley.* [See No. 22.]
2. *The Lost Lover; or, The Jealous Husband,* a comedy.
3. *The Royal Mischief,* a tragedy.
4. 1705. *Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians.* [1711, 1745, 1749, French trans. 1708. See No. 14.]
5. 1707. *Almyna; or, The Arabian Vow,* a tragedy.
6. 1709. *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes. From the New Atalantis,* vols. i and ii. [1720, 1736, French trans. 1713-16. See No. 7.]
7. 1710. *Memoirs of Europe towards the Close of the Eighth Century. Written by Eginardus,* in two vols. [Afterwards printed as vols. iii and iv of *The New Atalantis.* See No. 6.]
8. 1710-12. *The Examiner; or, Remarks on Papers and Occurrences.*
9. 1711. *A True Narrative of What Passed at the Examination of the Marquis of Guiscard.* [Reprinted in the *Somers Tracts,* vol. xiii, 1809.]
10. *Court Intrigues in a Collection of Original Letters from the Island of the New Atalantis.*
11. *A Comment on Dr. Hare's Sermon.*
12. *The Duke of Marlborough's Vindication.*
13. [*A Relation of the Several Facts and Circumstances of the Intended Riot and Tumult on Queen Elizabeth's Birthday.*]
14. *Secret History of Queen Zarah,* with the addition of a second part. [French trans., with key, 1712.]
15. 1713. *The Honour and Prerogative of the Queen's Majesty Vindicated and Defended against the Unexampled Insolence of the author of 'The Guardian.'*
16. 1714. *A Modest Enquiry into the Reasons of the Joy Expressed by a Certain Set of People upon the Spreading a Report of Her Majesty's Death.*
17. *The Adventures of Rivella; or, The History of the Author of the Atalantis. By Sir Charles Lovemore.* [See 19.]
18. 1717. *Lucius, the First Christian King of Britain,* a tragedy. [1720.]
19. *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Manley.* [Being a re-issue of No. 17.]
20. 1720. *The Power of Love in Seven Novels.* [1741.]
21. *Poems,* included in *A Miscellany of Original Poems,* edited by Anthony Hammond.
22. 1725. *A Stage-Coach Journey to Exeter . . . in Eight Letters to a Friend.* [See No. 1.]
23. *Mrs. Manley's History of Her Own Life and Times.* Printed from her Original Manuscript. With a complete Key. 4th edition.

III

Susanna Centlivre

1. 1700. *The Perjured Husband; or, The Adventures of Venice,* a tragedy. [1737.]
2. 1702. *The Beau's Duel; or, A Soldier for the Ladies,* a comedy. [1704, 1715, 1719, 1727, 1735, 1736.]
3. 1703. *The Stolen Heiress; or, The Salamanca Doctor Outplotted,* a comedy.
4. *Love's Contrivance; or, Le Medecin Malgré Lui,* a comedy. [1720.]
5. 1705. *The Gamester,* a comedy. [1708, 1714, 1736[2], 1756, 1760, 1765, 1767.]
6. 1706. *Love at a Venture,* a comedy.
7. *The Basset-Table,* a comedy. [1735, 1736.]
8. 1707. *The Platonic Lady,* a comedy.
9. 1709. *The Busy Body,* a comedy. [1732, 1746[2], 1753, 1765, 1776[2], 1777, 1787, 1797, 1808, 1811, 1815, 1818, 1824, 1829, 1834, 1850, 1883. Also in German.]
10. 1710. *The Man's Bewitched; or, The Devil to do About Her,* a comedy. [1737, 1738.]
11. *A Bickerstaff's Burying; or, Work for the Upholders,* a farce. [1713, 1724.]
12. 1711. *The Marplot; or, The Second Part of the Busy Body,* a comedy. [1737, 1760.]
13. 1712. *The Perplexed Lovers,* a comedy.
14. 1714. *The Wonder; or, A Woman Keeps a Secret,* a comedy. [1714, 1719, 1725, 1734, 1736, 1766, 1776, 1781, 1797, 1804, 1808, 1811, 1815, 1818, 1824[2], 1829, 1834, 1864, 1883. Also in French and Polish.]
15. 1715. *The Gotham Election,* a farce. [1737.]
16. *A Wife Well Managed,* a farce. [1737.]
17. *A Poem Humbly Presented to . . . George, King of Great Britain upon His Accession to the Throne.*
18. 1716. *Verses Upon the Sickness and Recovery of Robert Walpole.*
19. 1717. *The Cruel Gift; or, A Royal Resentment,* a tragedy. [1734, 1736.]
20. 1718. *A Bold Stroke for a Wife,* a comedy. [1724, 1728, 1729, 1735, 1763, 1776, 1797, 1808, 1811, 1814, 1815, 1818, 1824[3], 1829, 1834, 1842, 1883. Also twice in German.]
21. 1719. *A Pastoral on the Death of Mr. Rowe,* in *Musarum Lachrymæ, or Poems to the Memory of Nicholas Rowe.*
22. 1723. *The Artifice,* a comedy. [1735, 1736.]
23. 1755. [*Abelard to Heloise, a Poem in answer to that wrote by Mr. Pope.* First printed as by Mrs. C——r, and catalogued in the B.M. as by Mrs. Centlivre; the attribution seems very doubtful.]
24. 1761. *The Dramatic Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre,* in three vols.
25. 1872. Reprint of the preceding.

IV

Eliza Haywood

1. 1719. *Love in Excess; or, The Fatal Inquiry,* a novel. Parts i and ii.
2. 1720. *Love in Excess,* Part iii.
3. *Love in Excess.* [3rd Ed. 1721, 1722, 1724[2], 6th ed. 1725.]
4. 1721. *The Fair Captive,* a tragedy. [1724.]
5. *Letters from a Lady of Quality to a Chevalier,* translated from the French. [1724.]
6. 1722. *The British Recluse; or, The Secret History of Cleomira.* [2nd ed. 1722, 1724, 1725, 1732. See No. 14.]
7. 1723. *The Injured Husband; or, The Mistaken Resentment.* [2nd ed. 1723, 1724, 1725.]
8. *Idalia; or, The Unfortunate Mistress.* [2nd ed. 1723, 1725.]
9. *Lasselia; or, The Self-Abandoned.* [1724, 1725.]
10. 1724. *A Wife to be Let,* a comedy. [1729, 1735.]
11. *The Rash Resolve; or, The Untimely Discovery.* [2nd ed. 1724.]
12. **Poems on Several Occasions.* [1725.]
13. *Works,* in 4 vols. I. Love in Excess. II. The British Recluse; The Injured Husband; The Fair Captive. III. Idalia; Letters from a Lady of Quality. IV. Lasselia; The Rash Resolve; A Wife to be Let; Poems on Several Occasions.
14. *The British Recluse . . . and The Injured Husband,* two novels. [See Nos. 5 and 6.]
15. *The Surprise; or, Constancy Rewarded.* [1725.]
16. *A Spy Upon the Conjurer; or, A Collection of Surprising Stories . . . relating to Mr. Duncan Campbell, etc.* [Two other ed. 1724, 1725.]
17. *The Fatal Secret; or, Constancy in Distress.* [2nd ed. 1724.]
18. *The Masqueraders; or, Fatal Curiosity, Part I.* [3rd ed. 1724. See No. 23.]
19. *The Arragonian Queen,* a secret history. [2nd ed. 1724, 1727.]
20. *La Belle Assemblée; or, The Adventures of Six Days.* Part I., II., III. (forming Vol. I.) translated from the French. [See Nos. 39 and 66.]
21. *The Force of Nature; or, The Lucky Disappointment,* a novel.
22. **Fantomina; or, Love in a Maze.*
23. 1725. *The Masqueraders.* Part II. [See No. 18.]
24. *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia.* Vol. I. [See No. 42.]
25. *Bath-Intrigues in Four Letters to a Friend in London.* [3rd ed. 1725.]
26. *The Lady's Philosopher's Stone; or, The Caprices of Love and Destiny,* an Historical Novel, translated from the French.

27. *The Unequal Conflict; or, Nature Triumphant,* a novel. [1726. See No. 31.]
28. *The Tea-Table; or, A Conversation between Some Polite of both Sexes, at a Lady's Visiting Day,* Part I. [4th ed. 1725. See No. 36.]
29. *The Dumb Projector: Being a Surprising Account of a Trip to Holland made by Mr. Duncan Campbell.*
30. *Memoirs of the Baron de Brosse, who was Broke on the Wheel in the Reign of Lewis XIV,* Part I. [Apparently never completed.]
31. *Fatal Fondness; or, Love Its Own Opposer,* a novel. (Being a sequel to *The Unequal Conflict.* See No. 27.)
32. *Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots: Being the Secret History of Her Life and the Real Causes of all her Misfortunes.* Translated from the French. [1726, 1743.]
33. *Secret Histories, Novels and Poems,* in 4 vols. I. Love in Excess. II. The British Recluse; The Injured Husband; Poems on Several Occasions. III. Idalia; The Surprise; The Fatal Secret; Fantomina. IV. The Rash Resolve; The Masqueraders; Lasselia; The Force of Nature. [1732, 1742.]
34. *Secret Histories, Novels and Poems,* in 2 vols. I. is a replica of vol. iii, and II. a replica of vol. ii of the preceding.
35. 1726. *The Mercenary Lover; or, The Unfortunate Heiress,* an Utopian "secret history." [2nd ed. 1726. See No. 53.]
36. *The Tea-Table,* Part II. [See No. 28.]
37. *The Distressed Orphan; or, Love in a Mad-house.* [3rd ed. 1726. See No. 92.]
38. *Reflections on the Various Effects of Love,* an Utopian "secret history." [2nd ed. 1726, 1727.]
39. *La Belle Assemblée,* Vol. II. [See Nos. 20 and 66.]
40. *The City Jilt; or, The Alderman Turned Beau.* [2nd ed. 1726.]
41. *The Double Marriage; or, The Fatal Release.*
42. *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia,* Vol. II. [See No. 24.]
43. 1727. *The Secret History of the Present Intrigues of the Court of Caramania.* [2nd ed., with "key," 1727.]
44. *Letters from the Palace of Fame.*
45. *Cleomelia; or, The Generous Mistress . . .* to which is added, I. The Lucky Rape; or, Fate the Best Disposer. II. The Capricious Lover; or, No Trifling with a Woman. [2nd ed. 1727.]
46. *The Fruitless Enquiry.* [1767, 1777.]
47. *The Life of Madam de Villesache,* translated from the French.
48. [*Memoirs of the Court of Lilliput,* only attributed to E.H. in the notes to Pope's *Dunciad,* and almost certainly not hers.]
49. *The Perplexed Duchess; or, Treachery Rewarded.* [2nd issue 1727.]
50. *Love in its Variety,* translated from the Spanish. [1767.]
51. *Philidore and Placentia; or, L'Amour trop Delicat.*
52. *Secret Histories, Novels, etc. . . .* "printed since the publication of the four volumes of her Works," in 2 vols. I. The Distressed Orphan; The City Jilt; The

Double Marriage; Letters from the Palace of Fame; The Lady's Philosopher's Stone. II. Memoirs of the Baron de Brosse; Bath-Intrigues; The Masqueraders, Part 2; The Perplexed Duchess.

53. 1728. *The Mercenary Lover . . .* to which is added *The Padlock; or, No Guard Without Virtue.* [See No. 35.]
54. *The Agreeable Caledonian; or, Memoirs of Signora di Morella, a Roman Lady, etc.* [See Nos. 60 and 89.]
55. *Irish Artifice,* included in *The Female Dunciad.*
56. *Persecuted Virtue; or, The Cruel Lover.*
57. *The Disguised Prince; or, The Beautiful Parisian,* Part I., translated from the French. [1733. See No. 59.]
58. 1729. *Frederick, Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburgh,* a tragedy. [2nd ed. 1729.]
59. *The Disguised Prince,* Part II. [1733. See No. 57.]
60. *The Agreeable Caledonian,* Part II. [See Nos. 54 and 89.]
61. *The Fair Hebrew; or, A True but Secret History of Two Jewish Ladies Who Lately Resided in London.* [2nd ed. 1729.]
62. *Mrs. Haywood's Select Collection of Novels and Histories.* Written by the Most Celebrated Authors, in several languages. All newly translated from the originals, by several hands, in 6 vols.
63. 1730. *Love Letters on All Occasions lately passed between Persons of Distinction.*
64. 1732. [*Secret Memoirs of the Late Mr. Duncan Campbell.*]
65. 1733. *The Opera of Operas; or, Tom Thumb the Great,* with songs by E.H. and William Hatchett.
66. 1734. *L'Entretien des Beaux Esprits. Being the Sequel to La Belle Assemblée.* [See Nos. 20 and 39.]
67. 1736. *Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo. A Pre-Adamitical History.* [See No. 68.]
68. 1741. *The Unfortunate Princess,* etc. This was a reprint of No. 67, with a new title.
69. [*Anti-Pamela; or, Feigned Innocence Detected in a series of Syrena's Adventures.* [1742.]]
70. [*The Busy Body; or, Successful Spy,* translated from the French.]
71. 1742. *The Virtuous Villager; or, The Virgin's Victory,* translated from the French.
72. 1743. *A Present for a Servant Maid; or, The Sure Means of Gaining Love and Esteem.* [1743, 1744, 1745. See No. 90.]
73. 1744. *The Fortunate Foundlings, etc.* [3rd ed. 1748.]
74. 1745. [*Leonora; or, Characters Drawn from Real Life.*]
75. 1745-6. *The Female Spectator,* in monthly numbers, and then in 4 vols. [1747, 1748, 1750, 1755, 7th ed. 1771. Translated into French, 1751.]
76. 1746. *The Parrot.* With a Compendium of the Times. In nine weekly numbers.
77. 1748. *Life's Progress Through the Passions; or, The Adventures of Natura.*
78. 1749. [*Dalinda; or, The Double Marriage.*]
79. *Epistles for the Ladies.* [1753, 1776.]
80. 1750. [*A Letter from H—— G—— Esq.* [Translated into French, 1757.]]
81. [*The History of Cornelia.*]

82. 1751. *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless,* in 4 vols. [1751, 1765, 4th ed. 1768, 1783.]
83. 1753. *The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy,* in 3 vols. [1753, 1785.]
84. 1755. *The Invisible Spy.* [1759, 1766, 1773, 1778.]
85. [*Matrimony,* a novel in 2 vols.]
86. 1756. *The Wife.* [1756, 1762.]
87. *The Husband, in Answer to the Wife.*
88. *The Young Lady,* in twopenny numbers, only three of which were published.
89. 1768. *Clementina,* being a re-issue of *The Agreeable Caledonian* under a new title. [See Nos. 54 and 60.]
90. 1772. *A New Present for a Servant Maid.* [See No. 72.]
91. 1778. *The History of Leonora Meadowson.*
92. ?1770. *Love in a Madhouse; or, The History of Eliza Hartley, the Distressed Orphan.* [See No. 37.]
93. 1771. Several *Novels* of E.H. included in Elizabeth Griffith's *Collection of Novels.*
94. 1915. *The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood,* by George Frisbie Whicher, Ph.D.

V

Letitia Pilkington

1. 1748-54. *Memoirs of Mrs. Letitia Pilkington . . . Written by Herself.* [1749-54, 1751-54. See No. 8.]
2. 1748. *An Answer to Seasonable Advice to the Public Concerning a Book of Memoirs Lately Published.*
3. *An Answer to a Fool who modestly Styles Himself the Draper.*
4. *Mrs. Pilkington's Answer to the Rev. P—son P—ton Who assumes the name of William Hammond.*
   (The four preceding items were L.P.'s contributions to a Dublin broadsheet warfare occasioned by the publication of the first portion of her *Memoirs.*)
5. 1751. *The Celebrated Mrs. Pilkington's Jests; or, The Cabinet of Wit and Humour.* [1764, 1765.]
6. 1755. *Poems,* included in *Poems by Eminent Ladies,* edited by Mary Barber.
7. 1760. *A Collection of Letters between Mrs. L. Pilkington and Lord Kingsborough* included in *The Real Story of John Carteret Pilkington.*
8. 1928. *Memoirs of Mrs. Letitia Pilkington, 1712-1750. Written by Herself.* With an Introduction by Iris Barry.

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